



## MISSIONARY TRAINING

By James G. Smith Associate Mission Director



LANGUAGE • CUSTOMS • LIFESTYLES • METHODS • SKILLS

**H**ow were you trained and prepared for the ministry that you are doing? How could we do a better job training the next generation of missionaries? Those were the general ideas behind this issue of *Global Partners*.

If the churches of the Baptist Bible Fellowship International want to be more effective in accomplishing the Great Commission, it seems to us that improving the preparation of our missionaries is essential. Who better than the missionaries themselves to help us see where and how to make those improvements?

We are an interesting assortment of servants of the Lord. People outside of our movement sometimes have trouble identifying us. We have a wide variety of opinions, preferences, and beliefs. What pulls us under the same BBFI tent are our strong beliefs in the authority of Scripture, the sufficiency of Christ for salvation, the autonomy of the local church, and the responsibility of the Great Commission.

With any given issue of *Global Partners* we aspire to have between ten percent and 25 percent of our missionary force participate. It is never the same list of missionaries. Different

subjects are interesting to different people at different times. This issue was addressed by the wide gamut of our demographic. We heard back from all the continents and from many different ministry styles and approaches. The respondents include the oldest active BBFI missionary and several on their first term.

Some questions were statistical while others were philosophical. More than half of the respondents said they have a post-baccalaureate degree. Most of them said it has been beneficial to their ministries. Many of them indicated that more education always opens doors.

We are thrilled with the responses we received this time from our global partners. We think our readers will benefit from this discussion, but none more than the missionaries themselves. The newer ones and the more experienced ones will all benefit from the comments and suggestions from our peers. We hope all the missions professors at our various schools will take heart and take note of what is being said. We are fairly certain this issue of the *Tribune* will be highlighted in the Missionary Candidate School this summer! As always, your response is also welcome.

[GlobalPartners@bbfmissions.com](mailto:GlobalPartners@bbfmissions.com)

**More than half of the respondents said they have a post-baccalaureate degree.**

**Most of them said it has been beneficial to their ministries.**

**Many of them indicated that more education always opens doors.**

# If you were involved in preparing today's students for missionary service, what are the most important concepts you would share?

## Bob & Dee Dodson - Tanzania

**Theology!** These new students need to know who they are in Jesus Christ. They need to know just how much they are loved by the Father and Son. They need to know how much their salvation cost. Then when they enter their country of ministry and are spat upon, laughed at, and ridiculed for not understanding the language or culture, they can take heart. They will be less likely to skip out after one term.

## Dick & Linda Redding - Mexico

**The importance of having a clear call from God** to be a missionary.

- The necessity of having a vibrant and steadfast walk with the Lord.
- The development of Christian character founded upon this walk.
- The practice of real Christian character:
  - a. The word *quit* should not be in your vocabulary
  - b. You really believe that God's grace is sufficient and can walk by faith.
  - c. You allow God's love to be poured out in your heart.
  - d. You are not thin-skinned about being an American because you realize that your true homeland is heaven itself.
  - e. You earnestly desire to learn the language and culture of the people because that is evidence of the love of God in your life.
  - f. You have a firm grasp of the fundamentals of the faith.
- The necessity of staying with the primary missionary commands of Christ. It still is about going to win the lost, baptizing them, and teaching them to obey all of Christ's commands.
- Don't be sidetracked by missionary fads.

## Tim & Barbara Downs - Ivory Coast

**Cultural studies** should be core curriculum for anyone preparing for ministry in any place.

## Jon & Ruth Bergen - Scotland

**Be Flexible** — adapt to and adopt the culture God puts you in. Be patient with yourself and others — culture shock is real. Then get to work and get out of the way! Let God be God in your life and the lives of those you minister to. Don't try to convert everyone, rather preach the gospel and be friends with everyone — you don't know who God will reach through you.

## Ruth King - Japan

1. **"By My Spirit" says the Lord**
2. Solid Bible and doctrinal foundations. The emergent church and shallow doctrine allow for the next problem. Bible theology and exposition must be taught to keep future missions and missionaries true to the Bible and God.
3. Technological skills for those with ability (continuing my education has pushed me to develop computer competence.)
4. Mentoring. This could be a key which is not being properly utilized today.

## Bobby & Lisa Bechtel - Kenya

Learn to be self-sufficient with home and auto repair. **Concern yourself with discipling people not getting large crowds.** Follow God's leading always. How to raise funds in a Facebook world.

## Derrick & Amber Lewright - Poland

**People are people no matter where you go in the world.** Therefore, there are many commonalities that we must first focus upon, no matter how diverse the culture. Once we understand that we aren't so different from others, God can open us up to those things that are different and allow us to communicate cross-culturally by starting with our common ground.

## Dave & Peggy Disney - Chile

**Better preparation in doctrine and a daily personal devotion to God** is necessary. Beware of the attacks of Satan. Too many missionaries have left the field because of letting down their guard on personal matters and minimizing their own devotion to God while attending to the needs of the people they serve. Learn to be patient and flexible.

## Jim & Sybil Eberhard - Kenya

**Cross-culture training** that presses them into situations to see how to relate to a different culture. Reading books specific to your prospective country on cultural understanding. Indigenous principles training that balances church planting with relevant culture adaption and adoption. I see a need to help them determine what area of ministry will be the focus. Such areas may include planting churches, feeding programs, orphanages, youth ministries, or community development. Then how will they work to leave a self-sustaining work within the culture.

## Jim & Mary Blume - Papua New Guinea

**God is God.** Do not try to be a pope.

## Kevin & Sarah Pine - England

**Passion for the lost**, how to train national leaders, and a love for the local church.

## Robert & Margery Elam - Brazil

There are three things that need to be remembered by the new missionary:

1. **Learn the language!**
2. **Learn the culture!**
3. **You are not the master!**

You need to listen to the people. Missionaries need to know how to love the people. Rigidity does not cut it, even with sin. God has mercy on sinners! So many want to kill the sinner.

## Jeffery & Judy Blanton - South Africa

**Be faithful, be active where you are.** Wait on the Lord!

**Janice Baker - Haiti**

**Develop a personal one-on-one relationship with God.** Have the faith to believe so you know moment by moment what God's ministry is for you. It is easy to get involved in busy work. Having devotions should be our first work and after that comes ministry.

**Elmer Deal - Congo**

**Study hard,** memorize many verses of the Bible, and prepare messages from the Word of God.

**Jeff & Andrea Williams - Canada**

**Emphasize practical church work.** Intertwine their studies with actual ministry in their churches.

Explore in detail the successes and failures of missions in the BBFI specifically. Give specific facts and examples. Show what has worked and what has not worked, so that the wise ones will develop strategies that will lead to explosive growth and success. Our BBFI facts and figures are vague.

Help them define their role on the field and how they should prepare for it. Ask them if they are going to go all in and create a mother church that is completely dependent upon the missionary, or are they going to go the tougher route of actually letting churches be indigenous? Help them honestly assess the realities of each type of ministry and see practical long-term results with BBFI's own statistical information and practical examples.

Why are many BBFI ministries still fledgling and dependent, while other BBFI ministries are on fire and indigenous? Is it truly cultural? Is it the missionary?

**Name withheld - Tanzania**

**Commitment and sacrifice.** This try-it-and-see-if-I-like-it generation needs a healthy dose of pioneer missionary biographies.

**Christina Fulmer - Kenya**

**Learn the culture** of those to whom you have been called — and work within that culture!

**Rex & Jan Harmon - Jamaica**

**Old-fashioned soul winning** along with personal devotions and trusting in God.

**Tom & Regina Franklin - Dominican Republic**

**Anything and everything practical** — preaching, basic computer curriculum-CMS, server management, social media, video, print projects, international operations, law and nonprofit management, finance, agriculture-related course, building (wood, metal, and concrete), and mechanics.

More than 50 percent of the undergrad course needs to be skill orientated, 25 percent Bible and Theology, 25 percent missiological. Graduate school is the time to tackle the more advanced subject material.

**Bill & Rhonda Smith - Belize**

**Be prepared to learn as much if not more from failures** than from victories.

**Lavon & Carolyn Waters - Spain**

**Make a lifetime commitment;** not go and try it and see if you like it.

**David & Mary Campbell - Wales**

**Make sure you are following God and not people** (as well meaning as they may be). Be well rounded — if you have not taken any business or accounting courses (between you or your spouse) you should seriously consider taking some. Find the balance between having patience with adjusting to your new culture and maintaining your zeal — you have a lot to learn when you arrive!

**Tom & Janice Crawford - Indonesia**

- 1. The calling is the enabling.**
2. Make sure you have a good grasp of Biblical hermeneutics.
3. Don't trust your feelings, learn to live by faith.
4. Love the people God gives you.

**Mike & Pam Hillhouse - Burkina Faso**

**How to develop a vision and goals,** organizational skills, and conflict-resolution principles.

**George & Luisa Dimakos - Greece**

**Go prayed up, versed up, and know culture** and language before you go to the field if you can.

**Randy & Sandy Roberts - Costa Rica**

The ministry and call of God is an **"act of faith and a labor of God;"** not a job.

**Max & Debbie Harmon - Peru**

One must **be the example in everything.** We must help the national pastors and churches mature and fly alone. We should learn from and work at relationships with veteran missionaries.

**Sandra Loveday - Spain**

**Submission,** faithfulness, and dedication.

**Craig & Amanda Dyson - Ethiopia**

I think there is a great deal of pressure to have a specific number of churches started, a certain number of people saved, and baptize a specific number by a certain time. Sometimes it is easy to think that if you don't see tangible results then you are failing. **If you are working hard and trusting God then you have to be confident that God will bring the victory.**

Also, I would stress that even as a missionary your relationship with God comes first and then your family. If there are issues or your family is struggling, seek counsel and if you have to move back to the States, then do it. Don't sacrifice your family just because you are afraid of what churches will say. God has a purpose and if you have to move home then He will continue to use you there.

Work hard, trust God, and don't quit, but at the same time remember that your family is your first priority and ministry.

**Steven & Marilyn Trask - Brazil**

Present-day students, I would encourage you to **be students of the Word,** to be faithful to your call, and to labor well with the nationals of your country.


**Christine Pelletier - Kenya**

I would want to help teach new missionaries that **throwing money at a problem is not the answer.** I would want to warn them of the dangers of creating dependency on the missionary. We need to train our people to depend upon God.



# TRAINING REPORT CARD

**“Which college course has been the most helpful to you as a missionary?”** While several of these subjects got multiple votes, it was enlightening to us to see the wide variety of responses to this question. We list them below in no particular order:



- Hermeneutics
- Music Courses
- Speech
- English
- Theology
- Missions Tech
- Prophecy
- Life of Christ
- Philosophy of Thought
- Counseling
- Greek
- Pastoral Theology
- Baptist History
- Cultural Anthropology
- Cross-Cultural Church Planting
- Teacher Training
- Child Evangelism
- All the Bible Courses
- Old Testament
- Missions
- Cross-Cultural Communication
- Doctrine
- Expository Preaching
- Planting the Indigenous Church
- Missionary Life and Work
- Linguistics
- Technical Computer Skills

**“What subject matter did you not study but would have been helpful to you before going to your country?”**

(Responses in no particular order)

- Construction
- Auto maintenance
- Health
- Government red tape
- UK tax laws
- Interpersonal relationships
- Sanctity of marriage
- Cross-cultural communication
- Greek & Hebrew
- How to start a church
- Adapting to new cultures
- Economics
- Cultural anthropology
- Cross-cultural evangelism
- Evangelism theory
- Leadership dynamics
- Social organization
- Spiritual warfare
- Fund raising in a global marketplace
- Personal evangelism
- African cultures
- Basic management skills
- Managing hostile relationships
- Culture shock
- Living and working in the third world
- Linguistics
- Islamic studies
- Charismatic theology
- Business
- Technology
- Apologetics
- Postmodernism
- Comparative religions
- People skills
- Ethnographical research
- Cultural behavior

## Attitudes that become obstacles to missionary training

By Richard Lewis, DMiss.

Fireman, policeman, teacher, IT worker, missionary, nurse, farmer, carpenter — which do you believe from this list needs occasional updating on their skills and/or knowledge to remain effective? No doubt some professions require at least annual retraining, other professions need upgrading several times a year. Wait a minute, what's a missionary doing on this list?

I was visiting with a colleague recently on the importance of training missionaries. He has the unenviable job of trying to convince cross-cultural workers of their need for being taught in the skill of their profession. As we talked about the challenges of his task, we identified some obstacles of missionaries, new and old, buying into the idea they need for pre-field, post-field, and ongoing training. Some of the obstacles are philosophical; other areas of resistance are practical.

### **Missions is not a profession, it's a calling.**

No matter how you view career missions, a person still must learn some basic skills for cross-cultural work. Being called doesn't mean that God has supernaturally made a person better in relating to culture, made them more linguistically equipped, or gifted them supernaturally with the ability to communicate the message of Christ with relevance to people who are of a different faith worldview. These skills still need to be learned.

### **Missionaries have the Bible, they don't need anything else.**

While knowing the Scriptures is foundational for every missionary, most missionaries are taught from a mono-cultural and Western





perspective. They are also taught scripture from a specific theological/hermeneutical grid. Since scripture is as much a multi-cultural book as it is God's Word, missionaries need more training on how to present the gospel in the context of the target audience, not just merely how it is interpreted from one's own cultural context. Context gives meaning. The words one uses, even God's Word, have little to no effect until it is put into context.

### **More education doesn't make one more effective.**

I'm not sure if this is the old "ignorance is bliss" argument or just an anti-education bias. This is like the 1 Timothy 4:8 argument, "For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things." Yes, compared to godliness, physical exercise is less important, but exercise does profit a little. Although more education doesn't ensure success, the lack of understanding of culture carries with it a greater risk of failure in ministry. The issue is not "how much knowledge," but what type of knowledge is needed for the task at hand. Having a Master of Divinity degree, with a good working knowledge of Greek is helpful, but how one utilizes that knowledge speaking to illiterate people in the bush of Africa or the polytheistic Hindu in Nepal is the real issue.

### **Time. It has already been a long process in getting to the field. Adding another 2-3 months of training is a hardship.**

Learning a new computer program is time consuming. A person has three options: 1. Just don't learn a new program and stay with the outdated system; 2. install it and play around with it until you figure it out; 3. read the manual and take a class.

Missionaries often just ignore training, believing that what they have learned in ministry and life thus far is sufficient for cross-cultural work. Cultures, like operating systems, are different and changing all the time. Just ignoring this reality will retard missionary effectiveness.

Learning as you go might work, but more times than not, on-the-job training ends up taking much longer in our quest to understand culture and to be effective. Sadly, many people give up on missionary life because frustration sets in when they are on the field and, rather than working through the issues they just go home.

Training, like reading the manual, takes an initial investment in time but the end result is that missionaries will be able to enter their host culture armed with at least some understanding on what to do and how to do it among the people they have committed themselves to serve.

### **Money. Raising money for training just delays getting people to the field.**

How much does preventative medicine cost? It's probably a whole lot less than going to the ER.

Career missionaries spend a ton of money for everything from plane tickets to flat-screen TVs and I don't begrudge them one bit for money needed to live and survive on the field. But a significant number of those people raising money will come home after their first term on the field and many others will remain on the field not making a significant impact on those who have never heard the gospel. Money spent on being fully equipped for cross-cultural service is not a waste. I would argue training is an investment for family and God.

If I have to call 911, I'm glad to know that the fireman trains every week to fight fires and the policeman is updated on procedures daily. I'm glad the nurse looking after me in the hospital is not functioning solely from the classes she took in nursing school 10 years prior, but she is up-to-date on today's medical technology. As a profession, career missionaries should be as current in their occupation as any vocation that deals with life, death, and eternity.

The argument against missionary training is really an attempt to take a shortcut to ministry. The need is too great and the call is too important to not be equipped for cross-cultural service.



# What needs to change in the preparation of 21st-century missionary candidates?

## Derrick & Amber Lewright POLAND

All missions students need to understand the difference between message and methods. The methods will change from one era to another. In order to connect with people on a level they understand, we must adapt our method while maintaining the gospel message. Flexibility in methods while maintaining faithfulness to the Word of God must be the emphasis of 21st-century missions.

## Jeffery & Judy Blanton SOUTH AFRICA

More emphasis on people and less on technology.

## Elmer Deal CONGO

More commitment to faithfulness in obedience to God.

## Tom & Regina Franklin DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

More practical, less philosophical, training from men and women with field experience.

## Craig & Amanda Dyson ETHIOPIA

They need to be as prepared as possible and professional as well. Prayer letters need to be void of grammar and spelling errors and their video presentation should be quick and to the point. They have one shot. This continues to get better, but all of us should make as good a first impression as possible.

## Robert & Margery Elam BRAZIL

The thing we must change is our thinking that our way is the only way. The only foundation we can have that will perform the task is that of God's Word. Jesus said that He would build His church! We must instill in the new missionary the necessity of Bible-based teaching, preaching, and church planting. When we have finished the work God has given to us, we will see the national pastors taking on the role of leadership in the churches without our interference. In order to do this, we need to change the direction of our teaching and orientation. It is not up to us to build American churches on international sites. We need not be arrogant. We need to be humble and allow Jesus Christ to build the church His way.

## Jim & Mary Blume PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Get back to the fundamentals and stay there.

## Lavon & Carolyn Waters SPAIN

They need to be up to date on technology. They need to know how to operate with a budget and live within their means.

## George & Ellen King JAPAN

They need more experience in preaching on a regular basis before coming to the field.

## Janice Baker HAITI

Missionaries need to be taught that unsolved problems now may cause failure on the mission field. Appetites are too often pampered and not seen as sin. We need to be stricter in our screening process. The college attended is not the problem if the person has the leadership of God.

## Sandra Loveday SPAIN

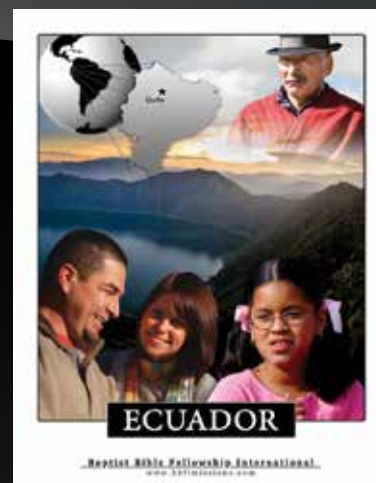
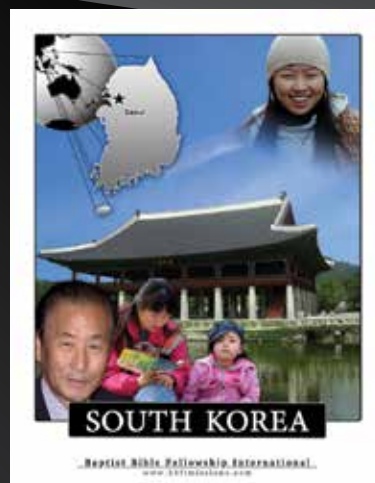
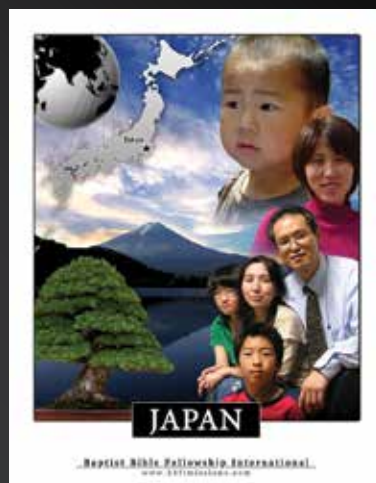
Updated information. Courses pertinent to the 21st-century missionary.

## MISSION FIELD POSTERS

Help promote missions in your church with these full-color visual reminders of the people and places of the world we are called to reach.

The 17" x 22" posters are \$8.00 each.

To see what countries are available and to order yours, visit [www.bbfmissions.com](http://www.bbfmissions.com)



**David & Edna Howell** **BRAZIL**

We have been here in Brazil for 40 years now. We have seen lots of missionaries come and go. They were all better supported than us, much more intelligent, and had lots of equipment. Most of them were gone in two years or less. All the ones I knew left because they took their eyes off Jesus.

**Ramzi & Ruth Kammar** **ISRAEL**

Raise the level of the spiritual requirements.

**Tom & Janice Crawford** **INDONESIA**

Less missionary professionalism, more basic Bible training. The missionary classes need to focus on the basics: 1) missionary life — living in a foreign culture 2) missionary ministry — starting churches in a foreign culture 3) missionary challenges — language study, dealing with foreign governments, money matters.

**Christine Pelletier** **KENYA**

Perhaps a greater commitment to personal evangelism one on one. I believe we need to train people to win others to themselves so that they can win them to Christ. In an increasingly hostile environment towards Christians and Christianity, I believe this to be the best preparation for 21st-century mission work. The large rallies and revival meetings and crusades, though helpful in spreading the gospel, do very little to help grow Christians to the point they're able to share that same gospel effectively within their own culture.

**Randy & Sandy Roberts** **COSTA RICA**

Many new missionaries are not grounded and settled in their faith. The 21st-century missionary needs to know more about who he is and why he believes.

**Christina Fulmer** **KENYA**

Personally, I believe faithfulness, good stewardship of support funds, and time alone with the Lord are vital areas of concern. It has been my personal experience to host “future missionaries” and their degree of dedication and faithfulness are shamefully lacking. Perhaps the current U.S. culture is to blame.

**Bobby & Lisa Bechtel** **KENYA**

They need to understand how to deal with terrorism and war situations. They need to understand the importance of vision casting among Americans which leads to better funding.

**Name withheld** **TANZANIA**

We need to equip and train missionaries beyond the field of missions theology, so they are qualified and prepared to enter least-reached and limited access nations and tribal groups. They need to leave school with two things: a degree other than just a Bible or theology or missions degree, and limited or no debt.

**Bill & Rhonda Smith** **BELIZE**

Logistically and financially it would be challenging, but if possible, spend a 6-12 month internship on the field before going full time.

**George & Luisa Dimakos** **GREECE**

Better use of technology and communications.

**Tim & Barbara Downs** **IVORY COAST**

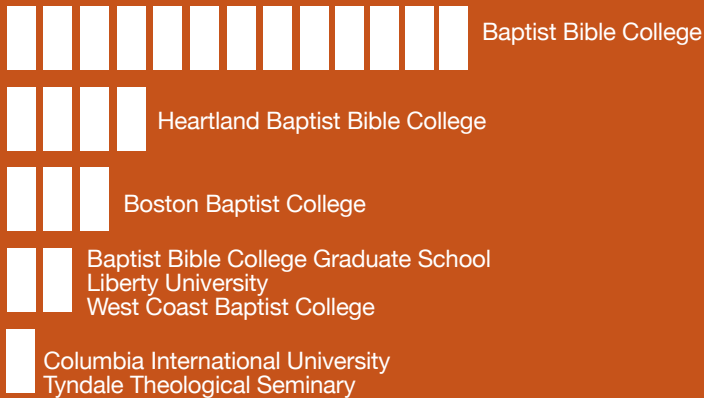
Exposure to people who are making an impact with evaluation of these same ministries. Mandatory time on the field (any field). Possibly more sociology training in an effort to identify and prepare for major cultural trends. I think we've been caught flat footed as we face a post-modern and post-Christian world.

**Bob & Dee Dodson** **TANZANIA**

Focus on basics and don't skip the requirements to get more candidates. Trust God and pray for workers in the harvest. He has a plan. We just need to know what it is, and get with it.

## RECOMMENDED SCHOOLS

Not all of the responding missionaries answered our question regarding their recommendation for missionary training, but the following graph represents the responses we received.



## WHERE WERE YOU TRAINED?

While the majority of the missionaries who responded to our questionnaire received their academic missionary training at Baptist Bible College and Baptist Bible College Graduate School, some of our missionaries have been trained at the following (*in no particular order*):

- Pacific Coast Baptist Bible College
- Atlantic Baptist Bible College
- Louisiana Baptist University
- Baptist Bible College West
- Pacific Baptist College
- Columbia Biblical Seminary
- Fuller Theological School of Intercultural Studies
- Temple Baptist Seminary
- Calvary Bible College
- Trinity Baptist College
- Biola University
- Summer Institute of Linguistics

# If you had one hour with future missionaries, what would you tell them?

## Janice Baker HAITI

I would want them to understand the all-important principle: **Christ in you, the hope of glory**. I would talk about self-discipline, self-denial, and self-acceptance.

## Name withheld TANZANIA

1. Go prepared to stay. It's a commitment, like marriage, not like joining a fantasy football league.

2. Disconnect from America so you are ready and able to connect with your new culture, people, and language. I would advise no visitors the first year on the field and limited or no social networking for the first year.

3. **Make learning the language and culture your number one priority for your first term.** Do not succumb to the temptation to get involved in ministry until this objective is met. Focus on this and determine to become a part of the culture and society at all costs, even if it means personal and family sacrifices.

## Georgia Webb MEXICO

First of all, make learning the language your very first priority. **The Lord may be very gracious to you and use you to some extent through an interpreter, but never as much as He could if you were able to speak to the people in their heart language.**

Along with the language, learn the culture. Become a part of the culture, adopting the customs of the people insofar as they do not conflict with your Christian convictions. One cannot truly learn the language without the culture nor the culture without the language. If possible, find a national church to attend, not an English-speaking church. At first, you and your family will need to spend time with the Lord in your native language, but become a part of the national church as much as possible. Even before you arrive, try to learn all you can of its history. Find the textbooks used in the schools (starting with kindergarten) and start reading them in order to learn what people have been taught from early childhood on up.

## Elmer Deal CONGO

To be sure they are called by God, to know as much as they possibly can about the country where they are to serve, **have a working knowledge of the Word of God**, and love the people with a genuine love.

## Jim & Mary Blume PAPUA NEW GUINEA

**Live for others and be a servant.** In so doing, one will find true success in the Lord.

## Christina Fulmer KENYA

To commit to their call and let nothing hinder them from achieving their goals for missions, ministry, and personal growth.

## Ruth King JAPAN

**Get involved in ministry and develop ministry partnerships now.** Being a missionary is not something that will start one year from now or ten years from now. When He calls you, the process has already begun.

## Jon & Ruth Bergen SCOTLAND

Love the people God puts in your life. Stay where He puts you. Elmer Deal told me the key to staying is to buy a cemetery plot and ignore the pastors stateside and just stay — and when you want to leave — just stay!

## Craig & Amanda Dyson ETHIOPIA

Culture shock is going to knock you down. I knew about it. Everyone knows about it, but it is harder than you realize. I would also tell them to be honest in their prayer letters. **Don't be negative, but also don't try to always make it seem that everything is perfect.** If you are struggling, be honest.

## George & Ellen King JAPAN

Get all the classroom training that you can, **go out and start a church and learn how before coming to the field.** I would emphasize the need to develop a devotional life that will give you a great sensitivity to the daily working and leadership of the Holy Spirit.

## Tim & Barbara Downs IVORY COAST

1. Language: no shortcuts, never compromise. It must be a very high priority.

2. Find two windows on culture: One national that will be honest with you, and a veteran missionary that can help you understand what you are seeing and experiencing and how it matters to you and your work.

3. Keep two fundamental principles in focus:  
a) Begin with the end in view. By trying to identify what it will look like when we leave, we can keep a wise view of the end.  
b) Everything must be reproducible. **It is shortsighted and flawed to build a work that "feels" good to us, but could never be reproduced in the host culture or economy.**

## David & Mary Campbell WALES

Make sure you are following God and not people. **Have a thick hide and a tender heart as well.** Remember, most of the people to whom you will be ministering will be lost.

## Jim & Sybil Eberhard KENYA

I would talk to them about what it looks like to walk with God on a daily basis through the ups and downs of marriage, family, and ministry. **When your life finds a balance, at the end of the day you are confident that what you have done is what is important to God.**

They need to learn to keep the main thing the main thing — loving their families, then winning, discipling, baptizing, and raising up leaders.

I would want to stress God's plan of reaching the world through individuals and how I believe in the BBFI's rifle approach to missions. This is a specific plan with a specific target of raising up local churches that work to reproduce themselves. If missionaries have other plans to reach people let them see the importance of pointing them through the local church.



**Paul and Alexis Dedeyan** FRANCE

Learn the language well! That can take years! **Also learn the culture, for we do not at first realize how much a people's way of thinking, their mentality, determines how they understand what you say.** I think missionaries are often more misunderstood than they realize. Getting the words right is only the beginning! The next step is learning to express the concept.

Another piece of advice — watch, observe, listen, and learn! Be teachable. Try to prepare yourself mentally to be surprised, maybe disappointed, even by Christians, or by other missionaries, because new things are seldom what we imagine them to be. If God called you, He will provide what you need ... but you may need to readjust and revise your plans or your way of thinking. If possible, have someone you can confide in, a sympathetic ear, a prayer partner, a mature Christian who will keep a confidence and be encouraging.

**Christine Pelletier** KENYA

Don't put or keep God in a box. Never, never underestimate the power of His Word.

**Sandra Loveday** SPAIN

The road ahead of you will not be easy. Being a missionary is not for the faint of heart, but if you cling to Christ every moment of every day the rewards will be eternal. **Do not look for praise or glory in this line of business.** The pay isn't the greatest either, but the benefits and the souls saved make being a missionary worth every trial and obstacle you must go through.

**David & Edna Howell** BRAZIL

We live in a dangerous place. We have had things stolen from our car and even had our car stolen. We have been shot at. We have had our house broken into and cleaned out on several occasions. Our family has been held hostage. **I have been at the wrong end of a gun several times. Keeping our eyes on Jesus is what has kept us here all this time.**

**Bill & Rhonda Smith** BELIZE

You can't change the world overnight. Be committed for the long haul.

**George & Luisa Dimakos** GREECE

Stay close with God, with family, and with other missionaries. **Avoid strife at all cost, especially with other missionaries.** Display love and ethics at home and in the ministry.

**Jeffery & Judy Blanton** SOUTH AFRICA

Don't quit! **Build a good relationship with your sending church.**

**Kevin & Sarah Pine** ENGLAND

Keep close watch over your walk with Christ. Don't get discouraged. **Find a good mentor with whom to do an internship.** Communicate clearly with them. Ask good questions. Be flexible.

**Mike & Pam Hillhouse** BURKINA FASO

Each field has its own unique set of challenges and problems that one has to face. The goal would be to encourage each one of the new candidates to stay true to their call despite challenges that might arise.

**Max & Debbie Harmon** PERU

Learn the language. **Spend time and travel with nationals.** Keep your personal family involved in the ministry. Take time just as a family with no ministry involvement.

**Dave & Peggy Disney** CHILE

Make sure of your calling. Get your house in order — if it is not well with your spouse or kids, wait. **When you get to the field, learn from other missionaries, but develop your own ministry.** How about being a "pioneer"? Try looking for a place on the field you are going to that doesn't have a missionary, a place that has the greatest need.

**Randy & Sandy Roberts** COSTA RICA

How we need to depend upon God and not man. I would tell them that on their darkest days, God will shine the brightest. **When you know your calling is sure, hard times will not destroy you but make you a better servant.**

**Bobby & Lisa Bechtel** KENYA

Seek God. Follow God (even into the unknown). Seek the lost. Use humanitarian means as well as evangelistic means to reach people with the gospel. Thank God for the increase!

**Jeff & Andrea Williams** CANADA

Set a goal to make your first church-planting attempt within one year of arriving on the field.

To that end, isolate yourself for one year from English and English speakers. Do everything in your power to make sure you and your wife learn the language! That is your ministry. **Stop repeating the mistakes of the 90 percent who try to work language study in while they minister in a partnership. It will retard their language skills for a decade. I am a personal witness to this.** After one year of intensive full-time focus on language learning, anyone will be well on their way to reaching their full potential very quickly. This is a key!

During the year of intensive language study, avoid other missionaries' ministries. Go to churches that are truly indigenous in every way. Go there humbly, not to minister, but to quietly learn. See how they do it. Let them teach you. It is a great way to build new relationships that will last your entire ministry. You will see things from their perspective. It will protect you from the need to revert back to English, and force you to use your ministry skills. Learn the practical ministry that indigenous churches have in regard to baptizing, administering the Lord's Supper, weddings, funerals, visiting, and preaching.

There is no way to gain experience without experience. Being a pastor of people for the first time changes you. Being an intern, candidate, and associate are just not the same.

Use local church Bible institute training as soon as possible. You may not produce many full-time workers at first, but the intensive Bible study will produce powerful people in your congregations who know what we believe and why we believe it. Typically they will be very loyal and faithful. I was frustrated that we did not see men rise up into leadership as quickly as I liked. But the side effect of the institute was a group of powerful believers who were very well educated in the Word of God.

## WHAT STATEMENT OR QUOTE DO YOU REMEMBER HEARING AS A MISSIONS STUDENT?

**Why wait for a call when you have a command?**

*Bob Hughes*

**Missions is the right arm of the BBF.**

*Fred Donnelson*

**The best ability that a missionary can have is stick-ability.**

*Jack Bridges*

**Bloom where you are planted.**

*Barbara & David Lingo*

**He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.**

*Jim Elliot*

**The light that shines farthest, shines brightest at home.**

**Don't tell me what your pastor said. What does the Bible say?**

**Preach the Word.**

*R. O. Woodworth*

**If there is no absolute to judge society, then society has become the absolute.**

*Francis Schaeffer*

**Expect great things from God, attempt great things for God.**

*William Carey*

**If I can talk you out of going to the mission field, then don't go.**

*Fred Donnelson*

**Be sure that God has called you and given you a special love for the people.**

*Elmer Deal*

**Failure is not final if you get back up.**

**Think what we can do together.**

*Carl Boonstra*

**Why stoop to be a king, when you could be a missionary?**

*Jack Baskin*

**The calling is the enabling.**

**Culture is a prison of disobedience.**

*Lingenfelter*

## Missionary Training: closing thoughts

Jon Konnerup • BBFI Mission Director

For 63 years the Baptist Bible Fellowship International has been spreading the truth of God's Word globally. We have had missionaries in 110 different countries. Because our churches are fulfilling the Great Commission given by Jesus, the missionaries they send out are involved in the most important endeavor given to man. Understanding this awesome responsibility, we have endeavored to place our best on the front lines of this task. The goal of our pastors and churches has been to send out those with passion for the lost and a pursuit of excellence in planting churches worldwide. These ministries today span the globe cross-culturally. Training national leaders through discipleship and formal education on the field has yielded amazing results, multiplying the efforts of the BBFI.

All of these great results for God's glory stem from a proven process we have followed these many years. We believe the local church is the scriptural sending agency where the process begins. It is the Holy Spirit who calls faithful members to a specific work that

He has prepared for them. The local church trains and discipless them, recognizes their call, and then tests them as individuals for future missionary work including them in different aspects of the ministry. The church then typically sends them off to Bible college, which focuses them exactly on what God has called them to do, and prepares them for that work. Upon graduation from college, their preparation continues in the context of the local church. After a one-year internship back in their own church, or in another one, they are passed on to the Mission Office. Here, they are screened and further equipped for the specific task of starting churches overseas. Then, the church sends them to where God has called them.

We at the BBFI Mission Office see the importance of the task before us and we recognize the process that begins with a call, and eventually leads to an arrival in a different culture with the gospel. Therefore, we desire to see the best-trained and prepared missionaries go to the regions beyond. The task before us is of eternal consequence for people around the world.