

# Berean Baptist Church Missions Philosophy and Missionary Expectations

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Sean Harris. Okay, if you're listening to this podcast right now, it's because you are either a member of Berean Baptist Church or you are a current missionary that we support, or perhaps you are a potential missionary. Bill, what we want to do, Bill Sturm, is the assistant pastor at Berean and he's our missions coordinator, missions director, and my name is Sean Harris and what we want to do, Bill, is we want to articulate our missions philosophy from this document that we've created. We want to talk about it and then we're going to post this on the missions webpage and we're going to expect all potential missionaries to listen to this podcast before they even send us a single line of communication because, quite frankly, Bill, you are busy, I am busy, we get all kinds of requests for, "Let us speak at your church," and, really, everyone can't come. That's just the reality. We don't have enough money to allow every Tom, Dick and Harry who wants to go on the mission field to come and present their work at Berean.

So why don't you introduce the missions philosophy and we'll talk about it as we go.

Bill Sturm. Alright, let's just go with the opening paragraph here.

"Berean Baptist Church is committed to financially partnering with men (and their spouses) who meet the qualifications of a bishop in 1st Timothy 3 and are committed to planting baptistic churches whose doctrine and objectives substantially line up with Berean's focus, Articles of Faith, and objectives as outlined on the church's website."

Sean. Okay, so if a guy wouldn't qualify to be a pastor, there's probably, Bill, a good chance we'll not support him as a missionary.

Bill. That's right. Moreover, it appears that if they would not line up with Berean's focus, Articles of Faith, in other words, since our members have to say, "Yeah, I agree with the Articles of Faith," you have to agree to the Articles of Faith to be a member.

Sean. Right, so we're not going to financially support you when you have issues with our Articles of Faith.

Bill. Right. That's right and our objectives, our focus in our missions program, if this is an issue with you, then it would be disingenuous of you to say, "Yup, I want to represent Berean Baptist Church on the mission field."

Sean. Alright, so don't assume anything about who we are because you go, "Oh, they're a fundamental Baptist church. I know what fundamental Baptist churches believe." If you submit a request for missions support and we start asking you questions and it becomes apparent to us, Bill, that you have not reviewed our website, looked at our contemporary issues page, looked at what we believe, and you can't talk intelligently about that, we're going to recognize that you can't even follow instructions and that's not going to do well for you.

Bill. Right. It's probably best for you just to...and there are plenty of churches out there that are just interested in picking you up for \$50 a month and they'll add you to their many missionaries and there won't be much level of accountability and that would be just fine.

Let's go on in the paragraph here. Alternately,

"Berean is also committed to financially supporting ministries whose primary focus is proclaiming the gospel and discipling converts of Christ and whose doctrine and objectives substantially line up with Berean's focus, Articles of Faith, and objectives."

Sean. Alright, so Bill, for us that number one ministry that comes to my mind is Camp Anchorage located at Lake Waccamaw. Now that is not a church plant. It's never going to become a church plant per se, but it does line up with our objective to disciple men and women, boys and girls, for the glory of God and so that's why we support it.

Bill. Right.

Sean. Talk to us about this first line, Bill.

Bill. In the second paragraph?

Sean. Yeah.

Bill.

"Our goal is to provide missionaries with 10% of their monthly support."

Sean. Okay, unpack that.

Bill. Alright, well, if a particular missionary needs, say, \$5-6,000 to go to Italy, let's just say, a month, we'd like to come up with 10% of that at least. In other words, we'd like to be able for them to drive away saying, "Wow, that's a big load right there."

Sean. Yeah, we're not interested in supporting a church at \$50 a month.

Bill. Right. Supporting a missionary, supporting a disciple, we don't want to do that. \$50 is a lot of money, that's true, but when you realize that the missionary probably put that in a few hours from his house into his gas tank, you've got to understand that our fellow pastors out there need to understand that they're probably not going to feel like they have to be accountable to you too much. Moreover, missionary friend, if we're providing 10% of your monthly support, we would expect that you would want to stay in good close contact with us.

Sean. You see, when a church supports a missionary at \$60 a month, Bill, and the guy doesn't communicate well with them, a drop of \$60 a month, yeah, it will impact them a little bit...

Bill. That's 1% of his total support and so he needs 99 churches just like mine and that's with no turnover, that's with, "Oh, this church had you budgeted but they didn't bring in the right amount of offerings," because a lot of churches do faith promise, it doesn't come out of their normal general funds. We're not here to take over the autonomy of other churches by any means. We don't have it perfect, of course not, but the chances are that that support that they're getting fluctuates and we'd like there to be less fluctuation in the missionaries that are partnered with Berean Baptist Church. We want them to be able to count on 10% of their support.

Sean.

"Our ongoing intent is to reward those missionaries and ministries with more monthly support whose labor is effective and to eliminate 'one talent' partners in accordance with the Lord's Parable of the Talents in Matthew 25."

Now, Bill, we're not going to do that immediately, we're going to do that, I say here, "no less than three years on the mission field." We don't expect the person to be able to walk into France, Morocco, Turkey, and just do wonders. That's not what we're talking about here.

Bill. There is a certain amount, we've heard a preacher in the past talk about this issue of assessing and one talent partners, maybe we should differentiate because the truth is that if someone is listening to this on their iPhone, they're not going to look at Matthew 25 while they're on I95. They're not going to do it so let's talk about that. It is the story of a master who divvies out his property to three stewards and it says according to their several ability, and it says that he gave to the one that he deemed as somewhat foolish, he gave him one talent and that guy went and buried his talent because he said, "I have an austere master." So this man has some botched up theology that drove him to do unwise things with chances of stewardship that the Lord gave him and so we don't want to be too

quick to judge but we do want to be quick to be wise stewards of the Lord's money and notice what we're calling quick, we're saying 36 months is quick.

Sean. Right. We're making an assessment. I mean, we have to make an assessment. There was a day of reckoning with the talents. There is an assessment being made. I mean, missionary, listen to this: we're not signing up for a lifetime commitment. That's not what we're doing here and the bottom line is we're looking for self-starters, Bill. We're looking for people who can manage their own time, have goals, objectives, can cast a vision and move towards it.

Now, Bill, what did your father-in-law say about the kind of missionaries that were out there?

Bill. Well, they've got...goodness, he said a lot of things.

Sean. I'm talking about the clever words that he used, that he described of them, stationary. Tell me about that.

Bill. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Well, you've got several kinds of missionaries under the branch of missionary. You've got the missionaries, they're the ones that are biblical and they're going from place to place planting churches and installing indigenous...

Sean. Yeah, I know about those ones. Get to the other ones, Bill.

Bill. The fun ones. Then you have the moochinaries, those are the people that love going from church to church and just asking for resources and, quite frankly, you wonder with a lot of them, Pastor Sean, whether or not they're going abroad because they can't preach on stateside. I mean, that's just the truth. We've sat through some really really terrible sermons and we hold the bar pretty high here for preaching. So you have the moochinaries....

Sean. Well, Bill, I can't imagine if you can't preach in English, how are you going to go overseas and do this whole language piece? I mean, it's hard enough to get it right in your native tongue, how are we going to send somebody who can't make it this side over there and say, "Now do even a better work."

Bill. Right, or even... Well, let's take it from another perspective. If you're a recluse and you can't get out of your office on the west side of the Atlantic Ocean, how am I supposed to suspect that you're going to be mingling with the people in Spain or in Madagascar, or how am I supposed to assume that you're having coffee with anyone in Italy if really you're just telling me that you couldn't make it over here as a pastor?

Sean. Alright, so moochinaries.

Bill. Then you have the vacationaries. Those are the people that can't ever seem to find their way off of deputation. They're always writing missions letters full of, "We went

here and we went there," and it's almost like you're reading the diary of a travel agent almost and they're enjoying great things.

So you have moochinaries, vacationaries, and then you've got stationaries. Those are the people that go somewhere and pitch their tent stakes real deep. They'll spend 10-15-20 years pastoring a church. They'll even go to the extent of supporting an entire missions program from their church that they're pastoring on American dimes. We have these people that actually come stateside, go to Bible college, raise American money, go back home where they are from and live high on the hog on the American dollar in their own country.

Sean. Especially if I marry a foreign national from that country, Bill, and that's where momma-in-law and father-in-law live and the grandparents live and all that.

Alright,

"Berean refuses to measure success merely in terms of 'souls saved' or 'people baptized' in so much as no ministry ever truly knows who was or was not converted (1 John 2:19)."

Bill, that's the reference where the Apostle John says that they went out from us but they were never part of us. Yeah, they were never part of us and so we're not looking for you to pad the numbers or give us nonsense. We're going to be concerned about that.

Bill. By the same token, you're going to read later on that we only require quarterly accountability and that's not much, and if after three months all you can do is tell us about a couple of conversations you're having and then tell us about Lulu getting a new dress, we're going to have trouble. We're going to have trouble with scant missions letters if the only thing you can tell us is you're writing a new book or you've got a new class at the institute. We're looking for something that says, "Hey, by the way, I'm not over here getting up at 8 o'clock, having cereal at 9, opening my mail at 10, preparing my sermon for an hour before the news show comes on at noon." We want to be confident that when people are working all day in Fayetteville to provide for their families and they give in the offering to support missionaries all over the world who are planting churches, we want them to be confident that our missionary partners are working hard in the vineyard of the Lord and not looking for an easy way to make a living.

Sean. Alright, we outline three ways that we support missionaries.

"Berean supports fewer missionaries than a typical church of our size.  
This allows us to:

- a. Focus our resources on fewer missionary families, which results in our partners spending less time on deputation, fulfilling fewer demands on furlough, and a greater probability of acquiring assistance with special projects or needs while on the field."

We don't want you to spend forever on deputation and if we can pick up 10% of your support, that might save you 12, 14, 15, 16 weeks on deputation. That also means that when you come back on furlough, that's 10, 12, 13, 14 less churches that you feel an obligation to drive to. Now the result of that is that we expect you to come see us, and we'll talk about that under our expectations.

Talk about this prayer thing, Bill.

Bill. Well, we spend a lot of time praying for our missionaries, probably not as much as we should but more than we did, let's just say that. Now when you have fewer missionaries, the human nature is that you can focus a little bit more on them because you know them a little better. You have more opportunities to meet your missions partners. You showcase them in your corporate worship, your hallway displays, your...

Sean. You invite them to come to a men's conference and hang out with the men of the church. You expect them to come and be with us and you expect your people to know who they are because you're not funneling hundreds through to the point where the missionary is like another member of the church.

Bill. Right, and the fact is, if you're getting \$8,000-14,000 a year from us, you're pretty much a staff member. I mean, we're going to treat you like there is some level of while you're home, we're glad you're here but meet while your in town with us. How can we pray for you? I can't believe we didn't know you had another child. That kind of thing. We want to know. We want to be involved in your life and if that's too close for comfort, we're not the church for you.

Sean. Right, or if you're not going to tell us that your wife is pregnant and we have to find out when the baby is two years old, we're going to be pretty disappointed with that.

Bill. Sure, and we're not going to see it as, "Man, what a jerk of a missionary," it's going to be, "How could we be so disconnected from people that are supposed to be duplicating our presence on the globe?"

Then there's this greater sense of responsibility. I mean, if we're going to be greatly invested, do you think, Pastor Sean, that it's too much to say we would hope that you would consider us an influential part of your life.

Sean. If not, don't take our money. I mean, that's just the reality. If you don't want me, Bill, influencing your life and the way you operate, then please stop collecting a salary from the church. This idea of us funding you with no expectation of communication, no expectation of you growing, us growing, iron sharpening iron, we're not interested in that. That doesn't seem to be the biblical model, Bill. I see Paul coming back, I see Barnabas coming back, I see them giving reports, I see the church at Jerusalem getting excited about it, I see that there's a relationship between these ministries.

Bill. So let's talk about some more of our support ideals. We desire to support missionaries with our presence.

Sean. So that means for us missions churches, Bill, are going to be first and foremost to our partners in the field. We're not going to have a scenario where we're going to go and see So-and-so in such-and-such, we've never met him before, we don't support him financially. Our goal is to go and visit our missionaries on the field both in the United States and overseas.

Bill. Right. We'll probably get to this but we're sending a mixed message to our Berean members if when we go on a missions opportunity we take them somewhere completely unrelated to the focus of our church.

Sean. Right, that doesn't make any sense.

"b. Trips will be planned annually and members will be encouraged to participate in these trips.

c. Involvement with our partners on their field will give us a greater appreciation for their work and contribute to creating a culture in our church where more members understand missions."

Bill. So we're going to strive to support missionaries in proportion to the work that we're doing locally. So we're not going to salve our conscience by supporting church planters when our members are not even willing to carry out the Great Commission here. What do we mean by that?

Sean. Well, our expectation is that we are still responsible to execute the Great Commission here in our Jerusalem, into Fort Bragg, into our communities, Spring Lake, and we're not going to become this great, "Okay, what's our church known for? We're a missionary sending church and 50% of our budget goes to missions and meanwhile our buildings are falling apart and we have a terrible reputation in Fayetteville, but my goodness, we're a great missions church." And that's a wonderful thing to say a church is a missions church but sometimes, Bill, it becomes an excuse not to be everything else. You know, we're a missions church and that means that the building is falling apart and everything else that is sometimes associated with that. We want to be a missions church, I mean, we want to be an Acts 1:8 church, but at the same time we do have responsibility to balance the allocation of funding to keep this facility strong and sound and growing.

Bill. Yup, so we also need to make sure that we're talking about missionaries who want to become partners and they need to request financial support, they need not request if they're not willing to align with this missions philosophy to follow and to meet these following expectations.

Sean. So we're going to outline 10 expectations, Bill, and if a person says, "I'm not willing to live up to those expectations," please don't bother us with your request for financial support. Don't send a standard form letter our way and expect us to respond. If your letter to us doesn't give us some indication, Bill, that you've heard this podcast and you know what's in it, I'm not going to respond. It's going to get deleted, okay? It's easy for a missionary to go on the internet and find 100 email addresses and send a standard form and hope that somebody bites the worm on the hook, but I'm not interested in biting a worm on the hook, I'm looking for self-starters, people who have initiative, those that are willing to follow instructions, those that see our church and say, "That's the kind of church I want to start overseas."

Bill. So,

"1. Partners are expected to live lives that are morally and ethically above reproach in accordance with the qualifications for a bishop outlined in 1st Timothy 3. Partners guilty of moral or ethical disqualifying misconduct will have their support immediately suspended or terminated."

What do we mean?

Sean. Okay, well, here's the bottom line: if you're a missionary and you're engaging in inappropriate relationships with a female overseas, you'd better start immediately setting up a financial reserve because the second we find out about it and it's substantiated, I don't mean alleged, I'm talking about your mission board contacts us and says, "Joe is no longer qualified because of financial misconduct or immoral behavior," we're not going to say, "Oh, I feel so sorry for you," and give you 90 more days worth of support. It's not going to happen. You're going to be terminated. Your support is going to be terminated. If, in fact, it turns out that we jumped the gun, Bill, we can always reinstate support. That's easy and we'll come back, but what we're not going to have is a scenario where we're trying to get money back from a mission board because we took forever and drug our feet in acting upon really the good stewardship of God's money.

Bill. So before we go on, the listener is wondering, "Does that actually happen?"

Sean. Yes. Yeah, that happens. Yeah, that happens and what we do is we take the money and we give it to somebody else that we're more confident in and attrition helps take care of that problem. We're not looking to have 50, 60, 70 missionaries. We have 25 right now that we support including a couple of agencies, and I think that's still too many, Bill. I think we need to take it down to less than 20 so that we can just right off the top of our minds go, "These are our missionaries," and just like if you asked me who's on my staff and I couldn't tell you who's on my staff, you'd say, "Wow."

Bill. How do you even pray for them?

Sean. Exactly. Right, and so if you've got so many missionaries that you can't even remember which one is in Italy and which one is in Brazil and who has two kids and who has three kids and when was the last time you were there, in my view it's too many.

Bill. Sure it is. Yeah.

Sean. Number 2.

"2. Partners must work hard as missionaries/pastors [now we've already talked about this], wisely manage their time, and be about their Father's business every day. Partners who wish to maintain their current level of support from Berean are not permitted to engage in small business activities and/or secular employment without prior approval from Berean. Berean expects its partners to effectively plan for retirement and to purchase term life insurance."

Sean. Okay, let's talk about that, Bill. You need to be preparing for the day you come off the field. You need to be doing that, missionary.

Bill. You need to assume you're normal. Normal people don't preach in the Congo until they're 92. They don't expect to die in the pulpit. That's not normal. We can hope that God grants us until we're 95 to still be preaching. I love preaching so much I was doing it before I was getting paid to do it. I would like to think that I'll do it after I'm getting paid to do it, but I'm wondering, I'm wondering if our missionaries are being disingenuous with themselves sometimes. So sometimes, isn't it true that we've had missionaries in the last couple of years that we have discontinued support because we found out basically they're Sunday school teachers on an island.

Sean. Right, right, and we're not going to support you to go somewhere and retire and enjoy a good life. You need to prepare for that. If that means that you buy a home stateside and you rent that home out, Bill, and so you're gaining equity in a home stateside and an agency is managing that for you, in 25 years from now you have a mortgage paid for and others have paid for, that's one way of doing it. There are all kinds of ideas.

This idea, Bill, they have to have term life insurance. It's absolutely critical in the same way that I expect you to have term life insurance because I cannot financially take care of your wife from this ministry for the rest of her existence. If something happens to you, Bill, and you have a heart attack and now your wife is still part of this church and you have three children and we're crazy about your family but I can't keep giving her the salary that you earned on staff so that she has something. So I expect you to have term life insurance to take care of your wife in your premature death. What would be different about a missionary?

Bill. Right. Let's rehearse here for the listener everything that we've seen in the last 25 months. We're talking about missionaries who retire on the field and don't tell us.

Missionaries who change fields and don't tell us. Missionaries who take special project funds that we've provided and put it in different projects. Missionaries that are supporting a plethora of other missionaries from their churches they've been at for two decades.

Sean. Missionaries that tell us they're going to country X and never get to country X at all, Bill, and they don't tell us that they did not get...

Bill. And missionaries who die. I mean, there is nothing unethical about dying, the problem is when you die and you don't provide for your wife and all these have happened to us in the last two years, haven't they?

Sean. Yeah, two years that we've seen all this and this is really what's driving the train to articulate this missions philosophy and to make sure that you as a missionary have term life insurance purchased for yourself. It's not really that expensive and it's good peace of mind.

Bill. And if something as simple as we talk about planning for retirement, how would that translate to you? How would you know if someone was adequately planning for retirement?

Sean. Well, they have to be setting aside money, Bill. They have to have a plan whereby a 401k plan or something is growing, or they're paying into Social Security, but there needs to be a definitive method whereby there isn't an expectation that they're going to come off the mission field at 62 years old and then for the next 20 years Berean Baptist Church is going to fund their lifestyle in Spring Lake, North Carolina. That's simply not going to happen. I don't expect this church, Berean Baptist Church, to allow me to retire at 62 years old and then sustain my current salary for the rest of my life as I play golf three times a week and whatever that other you do on retirement and make birdhouses. So as a missionary, don't expect that.

"3. Partners are to preach the gospel, baptize converts, and make disciples according to the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20."

It seems ridiculous that we would even have to say that, Bill, but it's imperative that we remind you that that's what you're going out there for.

"All mercy ministries must be executed to complement and support the proclamation of the person and work of Christ and the making of disciples."

What do we mean by mercy ministries, Bill?

Bill. It could be anything from building orphanages to digging wells, to feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, things that are important but are nonetheless important in a list of important things of which the Gospel is paramount.

Sean. Jonathan Huff gave us a great example from Togo missionaries. I think it was he took the chief of a village's son to the hospital and paid for the son's medical attention and immediately earned instant credibility with the chief of the village which set the conditions for him to be able to preach in that village. So we want to be able to support you at a financial level sufficient to where you can pull an extra \$5 out of your wallet and take a kid to the hospital and get an infection cleaned up and gain credibility with somebody.

Bill. Right. Drinking water, we sent \$400, that same missionary, to dig a well and then what a joy it was. He comes back and reports to us and, oh by the way, shows us a picture of people gathered around the well that we sent money to get dug.

Sean. So we're very excited about helping you with mercy ministries as long as that undergirds your preaching ministry.

Bill. Right. So,

"4. Church planters are expected to build their church to a sufficient size in order to no longer need financial support. Church planters in nations where foreigners cannot be in country as salaried employees of the church should expeditiously turn their church over to local nationals and subsequently plant new churches. Berean will not financially support church plants that are supporting other missionaries. We believe the pastor is the church's first missionary."

Sean. Yeah, we really need to talk about this, Bill, because there seems to be some confusion about this in some people's minds. I'm not interested in the money that I'm sending to church X to subsidize missionaries that they are, in fact, supporting. I don't know who those missionaries are, Bill. I don't know whether there's any real accountability. I don't know whether it's Paul paying Peter and Peter paying Paul and it's you scratch my back and I'll scratch your back. I don't know about any of those scenarios, Bill, and so you need to understand that we expect you to get your church up and running and either turn that thing over to a local foreign national and go on and start another one, or send us an email and say, "Hey, it's been wonderful, it's been great but I no longer need your financial support. The church is now able to support me." Because again, we're not entering into a lifetime agreement here. That is so important for people to understand.

Bill. And if you're going to stay at that church, please don't expect to maintain an American level of support and we've already said, don't expect to maintain our support at all, but I'm asking you for the purpose of the Gospel. Don't just say, "I don't need your support at all," and expect to have an American level of support on a field where you're considered a millionaire because you live behind a gate and you've got a brand new car, and your people are walking an hour to church. You know, that happens.

Sean. Sure it happens. Absolutely, and people like that, the reason we are funding you at a full level of support is so that you have extra money to give, to use, to fund your

ministry, to pay for printing and all those extra things, not so that your lifestyle is substantially better than everyone in your entire congregation.

Bill. So,

"5. Partners are expected to send accurate monthly updates with absolutely no less than quarterly updates. Partners are expected to read and respond to emails sent to them directly and to pray for Berean and its ministries. "

Sean. Yeah, it's a reciprocal relationship, Bill. We want you to know what's going on in our church as well as we knowing what's going on there. It seems to me that sometimes missionaries think that it's just a one-way road and what's going on in the other church, you know, is really of no concern to them because they're the missionaries suffering for Jesus. If I send you an email and unless I know, Bill, we've got some missionaries out there that are in remote situations and they don't have connectivity inside their house, they have to go to a coffee shop or they have to go somewhere, well, I understand that but most missionaries in the world we're living in today, Bill, most missionaries have connectivity in their house and we're talking about even in Togo, West Africa, connectivity in his house. So if you have internet connectivity and your wife has time to get on Facebook every day and update her Facebook status but you can't get on there to respond to an email, I'm having a hard time understanding how that works.

Bill. So,

"6. Partners must remain committed to the vision, location, and objectives communicated to the church when missionary support began and communicate changes in focus, location, or objectives with Berean before the changes are acted upon."

Sean. Before. Now, Bill, before the changes are. We're not expecting to get an email from you that tells us, "Hey, we're no longer in Rhode Island doing a church plant, we've decided that we're going to do a church plant in Jacksonville, Florida." Okay, you know the reason you waited to tell us that is because if you had been upfront at the beginning and said, "We want to plant a church in Jacksonville, Florida," we would have said, "Go jump in a lake." There are enough Baptist churches in Jacksonville, Florida for eternity. We don't need another one.

Bill. That's a fact.

Sean. Right. So, you know, if you change your focus, location or objectives and don't tell us about it beforehand and as far as I'm concerned, that's grounds for either suspension or termination of support.

Bill. And it's certainly grounds to call your mission board. Number 7,

"7. Partners are expected to notify Berean of all plans to be on furlough or on leave from the mission field, and they are expected to report to Berean during furlough or ask for an exception due to extenuating circumstances or regional focus during furlough. Berean should receive priority in scheduling in accordance to the degree in which Berean supports the partner's ministry in comparison to other churches."

Bill. In other words, if we've got 10 or 20% of your support we're taking care of, we would expect to be the first one that you come to when you come stateside.

Sean. Right, and at the bare minimum, Bill, we're asking you to send us an email and say, "We're going to be in the States between the months of September and January. When would you like us to come visit?" Then we can look in our calendar, Bill, and we don't want to be pigeon-holed into a Sunday that we know wouldn't be a good Sunday for the guy to come. Say it's a four day weekend for Berean or something like that, or we've got another event on the schedule. We want to be able to look at our schedule and say, "It's going to be great to see So-and-so and so let's make sure this is the Sunday that they're coming," and we can tell our people about it and we can prepare for your visit. We don't want to know the weekend before and you're calling us up at the last minute and we didn't even know you were stateside.

Bill. Right, and I want to clarify, I didn't mean to say that you come to us before you go anywhere else to see momma, I'm saying come to us in an email or a phone call just as Pastor Sean just stated. For instance, we're not interested in taking the place of your sending church. If you feel like God has you in the correct church, your pastor is sending, okay, but if your pastor discontinues your support for example, we're going to wonder about the whole sending church idea. If you don't call us, don't stay in touch with us and you call us your sending church, we're also going to think that maybe there's a problem there where you're shying away from a level of accountability and we're probably going to call you.

Sean.

"9. Partners must ensure that those whom they engage with the gospel are not given false assurance of salvation (eternal life) because of the articulation of a sinner's prayer or a gospel presentation devoid of the biblical expectation to place repentant faith (trust) in the Person and Work of Christ."

Bill, the words that I just despise to read are "pray to receive." I just despise to read those words in a missionary letter and I see it sometimes, "100 people prayed to receive Christ." I would like one Bible verse, one single Bible verse to show me and please do not quote Romans 10:13. Please don't quote that verse. That is not the context. Read the context of when someone prays to receive, or if you're afraid to talk about repentance, maybe you shouldn't go on the mission field.

Bill. That's a fact. That's a fact. If there's one thing we're fully aware of in Paul's missionary outings is that he preached repentance towards God and faith in Christ. You know, I understand we have to put these in some sort of numerical order to enunciate them and people might think that because this is number 9 on a list of 10 that we assume that most people have it right when the truth is we're finding that most people do not.

Sean. Most people do not have it right and if you'd like to do some more correspondence about this, we'd love to engage you. We've done podcasts, written articles about it, so we don't have to belabor this very much. We're going to ask you about it in person if you decide that you want to receive support and we need to put you on notice, we need to put you on notice, if you tell us and sing to us a song and dance about, "Yeah, I agree with you," and then the first missionary letter we get from you is packed full of this kind of language because you're trying to appease the other churches that believe in this nonsense that people pray to receive Christ instead of believing upon the name of the Son of God which is substantially different, Bill, it's not a matter of semantics here. It's not a matter of semantics so don't go down that road. If we find that you are disingenuous with us in your conversations and you're playing two fiddles, one to your sending church and one to us, that's going to be grounds for suspension or termination of support.

Bill. And maybe we should just talk about this while we're at it: if you do have two statements of faith, so to speak, that you exercise, please don't wear us out with it. In other words, if you go to churches that are just angry, independent, fundamental Baptist churches, you're not going to find that here. We get some churches from some camps, we get some missionaries from some camps that because it says in our website that as a church in corporate worship we use the King James version, they think that means that we're King James Only and angry about it. We're not King James Only in the general understanding of King James Only.

Sean. What that means for us and it's real simple, is that our Sunday school teachers and our preachers read from and preach from the King James Bible. Do not read anything more into that. We do not believe in any double inspiration nonsense. We do not believe that it is the single, only, greatest, wonderful translation on the planet and on and on and on. We think that it is a good, solid, literal translation that still needs lots of unpacking because words change in meaning. So please do not be disingenuous.

Bill. Yeah, and usually we can tell what we're talking about just by going on your website or your church's website. I have found out several missionaries being the missions point of contact here, I've met several missionaries who will send us their stuff be it email or snail mail, or they'll call, and I'll just simply go to their church's website and I will read their statement of faith and be very disappointed. Now, you don't have to please me but if you're asking for monetary help from us, you at least need to be honest with us and I'm afraid that missionaries sometimes there have been a few who have not been altogether honest.

Sean. Bill, the Togolese, they don't care about the King James Only debate, okay? That is absolutely meaningless to them. The Muslims in West Africa that our dear brother is trying to reach with the Gospel, that whole thing is just absurd to them.

Bill. Yeah, and let's just go ahead and while we're plowing close to the corner, let's drop another blade here. It doesn't matter to the dude down on the street in Fayetteville, North Carolina either.

Sean. No, no it doesn't, Bill. It is a non-issue to him. It is absolutely a non-issue to him. The only people that care about this issue on the planet right now are independent, fundamental Baptists. That's it.

Bill. Who are, by the way, I should qualify that, who are pretty much in their minds saved. You know, there's no lost person who wants to make sure they've got the correct version of the Bible and when it comes to missions, were really concerned about that perspective.

Sean. Yeah, we need to communicate the story of the Gospel in language that is plain to the person on the field and there is no, no need, Bill, to be obnoxiously adhering to try to somehow have a King Jamesish Gospel presentation preaching on the foreign mission field. They need to break it down and put it in words that the person listening can understand and this internal fight that everyone's fighting about is transparent to the rest of the world, Bill.

Bill. Yeah, it's lame to them.

Sean. Right, and I'm talking about Methodists, Presbyterians, Pentecostals. They're not even aware that this thing is going on or how could someone be debating that.

Alright, number 10.

"10. Partners are expected to be completely transparent in matters of discouragement, depression, financial needs, and health issues without fear of immediate or heartless reduction in financial support."

Bill. So having said everything that we've said, we want to make sure that we're putting a footnote down there that says, "Oh by the way, we know that you're human and that you have needs and heartaches and family time and need for personal refreshment."

Sean. Absolutely. Like, Bill, we could go back up to number 2 that says partners must work hard as missionary pastors, wisely manage their time, and be about their Father's business every day. Well, someone might look at that, Bill, and say, "Oh, Father's business every day. That means he wants me out door-knocking seven days a week." That's not what that says at all.

Bill. And the reason that you can know that we don't mean that is because we don't do it seven days a week.

Sean. That's right. Father's business is what is the will of God for you right now. If that means the will of God for you right now is spending quality time with your six year old daughter so that she doesn't resent you being on the mission field, then that's the Father's business right there. If the Father's business is for you to take a good three hour nap because you're absolutely exhausted and if you don't take care of your body and your health and your welfare, you're going to be off the mission field in a year, then take a three hour nap. We're not saying here that there's some expectation that you do what we don't do. We're not trying to create a double-standard here. We don't work seven days a week, Bill. Now sometimes we do.

Bill. Sure, but we're not looking for opportunities to do it. It's because someone's in the hospital. It's because there's a...

Sean. ...funeral on Saturday.

Bill. There's a wedding. There's a funeral. There are games and we want to be in and out among the people of God. There are sporting events for the school. So we attend and, yes, yes, we're there to be their for our kids, to be there as coaches, but we're there to disciple our people too.

Sean. To interact with them. To create opportunities to see them that we wouldn't otherwise do. So we're not expecting you as a missionary to do something that we're not doing so I don't want anyone to walk away from this podcast, Bill, thinking that there's some unbelievable ridiculous expectation. That's not what we're saying here. What we are saying is we expect you to perform at the same level as though you were a staff member here. That's not hard. That's really not hard. We get up every morning, we come to work. We expect you to do the same thing on the mission field. The difference is there isn't any way to account for that and that's frustrating, Bill, because we know that there could be guys right now that we're supporting financially and they might be working 20 hours a week legitimately and there's no way around that, not knowing that. We're going to try to sense it, Bill. We're going to try to pay attention. We're going to try to get a feel from what are you doing and how can we measure that and how can we see it. Sometimes we get taken.

Bill. We sure do, but it's worth the risk, isn't it?

Sean. It is worth the risk, right, but that's why we included in our missionary philosophy there the idea that we're going to reward those that we can see that labor well and we're going to do our very best to eliminate the one talent missionaries.

Bill. That's right, and it's not because of the austere master, it's because of the several ability. That's what the passage says, it's because that one talent missionary needs to perhaps think about investing the Lord's goods in another field.

Sean. And we have a responsibility, Bill, as the stewards of the money that God's people give. You know, we're talking about millions of dollars funneled through this ministry and we have the responsibility to make sure that money is not going somewhere that it should not and so thus the articulation of this philosophy.

So if you listen to this podcast, I'm going to ask Bill now to give you his email address and we're going to remove other points of information on there, Bill, so that if we get a request from, say, the Berean Baptist Church at gmail, well, we know they didn't listen to this because we want them to email you directly and if you get an email, then we know they listened to the podcast. If I get an email, then they were just fishing for an email address. So give them your email address.

Bill. Alright, folks, my email address is [bsturm.bbc@gmail.com](mailto:bsturm.bbc@gmail.com). Of course, that's limitless. That shakes my hip every time someone emails me so you can reach me pretty much anytime.

Sean. Right, so don't call the church. Don't bother the church secretary. Don't call 910-868-5156 and ask to speak to a pastor.

Bill. Don't send us a packet.

Sean. Right, don't send us a packet, just send us an email that says, "I've listened to this podcast and I'm interested in finding out more information." At that point, Bill, we're going to send them the mission, the pdf of the application so that they can, then, fill out an application and send it to us. If this is too much for you, then we know you're not going to be our kind of missionary.

Bill. No, and we also know that you don't have the ability to do an analysis of cost versus benefit. If you want to go through the process of driving to seven different states to go to 12 or 15 more churches, that's between you and God and that proves that you're a one talent servant.

Sean. Right, exactly, but if you're wise and you can see, "If I line up with the vision, the objectives, the Articles of Faith, the Baptist doctrine in this church, then this will be wise for me to engage this ministry."

Well, thank you so much for taking the time to listen to this. The pdf will be available for you as well but on the pdf there will not be the points of contact because, again, our expectation is that you listen to this podcast. Have a great day. We pray that God will bless your effort as a missionary and that he will provide for your needs, and if it is his will, that he'll link you up with us and we'll be linked up with you.