

Being a Fellow Helper to the Truth

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[0 : 00] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. It is our prayer that you will be blessed by the preaching of God's Word.

Well, take your bibles if you would and start with me to 3 John and verse 5. 3 John and verse 5. And we're going to read verse 5 down through verse 8. And you have been through all of this material some.

I want to talk to you a little bit tonight. And I want to talk to the missionaries. Maybe a side of it that I haven't dealt with as much. And I want to talk to you about being a fellow helper to the truth.

Being a fellow helper to the truth. A yoke fellow. The Bible says in 3 John 5. Beloved, thou dost faithfully whatsoever thou dost to the brethren and to strangers which have borne witness of thy charity before the church whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort thou shalt do well.

Because that for his name's sake they went forth taking nothing of the Gentiles. We therefore ought to receive such that we might be fellow helpers to the truth.

[1 : 13] Father, I love you and I thank you so much for the privilege of being a church. And letting you letting us serve you and work together as a great big family, as a church, a congregation, an assembly of people that love you.

And a group of people that are committed to carrying out your wishes and your purposes. God, I want to ask you to help us be an example and show others how we can love missions and love missionary work and love getting the gospel to the world in a very unique and special way.

I pray you'd show your power and direct us and guide us. And I pray, God, you'd be with all these wonderful people that came forward tonight as yoke fellows. And then I pray, God, that you'd raise up more. And I pray you'd help on the missionary side and on the yoke fellow side.

And I'll give you praise for all in Jesus' name. Amen. Would your Bible open there to 3 John, verse 5. Kind of look down back through the verses with me and notice this. John tells the church that they've done good to look after people they knew and didn't know who were carrying the gospel and had passed through their church.

Look at chapter, verse 5. It said, Beloved, thou dost faithfully whatsoever thou dost to the brethren. That's brothers in Christ. That's the guys you know.

[2 : 34] They attend our church. They're missionaries. They stood up here a while ago, and they gave a report. And you also do that to strangers. These strangers are simply people you don't know. You know, I'll be sitting over there with the guys in my office, and the door will be shut, and we'll be in a private conference, and somebody walks in, and I say, I don't know that guy.

Who is that? And one of the guys will say, Let me go find out. And they get up, and they go look, and they come back and tell me who that is sometimes. So that's brethren and strangers. Then it says, Would you have borne witness of thy charity before the church?

And so in other congregations, we're hearing about these brothers and strangers, these people in the ministry that were coming through, and they come to the church, and John said, They're hearing about you, and they're hearing about the love you have.

And then look what it says. Whom if thou bring forward on their journey, after a godly sort, you do well. So you're going to bring them forward. Our missionaries travel all over the place and raise support.

Some, like Miguel and Mary Angela, try to have a wreck about every once a month, sleep in their car with a couple of flat tires a month before that, and that's their three months of deputation.

[3 : 47] I have no idea what kind of report we'll have at the end of a year or two. Amen. And so they're on a journey, and Ben and Crystal are very close to completing their journey of getting there, but they've been traveling to churches.

Some of the guys almost get all 50 states while they're traveling to churches. So they're going around raising up this money, and he said, I want you to bring them forward on their journey.

Help them get where they're going. By the way, the apostle Paul makes a comment, I'd like to stop by and see you guys while I'm on my way to Spain and have you guys, I'll be a blessing to you.

Y'all be a blessing to me. That was, I'll preach. Y'all will get a good blessing out of that, and I'm expecting an offering, and I'll get a good blessing out of that. Say amen. Paul was already setting up this whole missionary thing.

They'll bring forward on the journey after a godly sort. Treat them right. Treat them right. They are going out to do something. Let's treat them like God would want them treated. They're his guys going out to share his message.

[4 : 45] Verse 7, Because that for his name's sake they went forth. I was just in Hawaii. And you'll be surprised to know they can't keep pastors.

Because people go to pastor in Hawaii from the mainland, and they usually last about two years before they come back to America. The church we were in, been there 50 years, and one pastor stayed 12 years.

He's from Hawaii. So that leaves 38 years, and they have had 19 pastors in that time, if that gives you any idea. This church is almost 10 years old, and you've been stuck with one all that time.

And so, but the nationals even made the comment, the national being a Hawaiian national. You know, that's a third world country over there. And, but they made the comment, you know, we'd like to know, can Brendan take it not living close to home?

Because we've already seen what happens when people leave. So for their name, for his name's sake, that's why you leave. You know, you don't leave home. I've been living outside of Tennessee since I was 18.

[5 : 53] I always dream about going back to Tennessee. I dream about someday being old and having a house by the creek. I ain't never going to do it, but you know, and I wouldn't like it if I had it.

I mean, I left Hawaii early. It cost me \$300. I had enough of Hawaii about the third day and got through with the ordination, and I was like, I'm ready to go. And so we got out.

So why would you go? Why would you leave home? Why would you leave what you're familiar with? Why would you go to a place that speaks a weird language? Why would you go to where people have different cultures?

Why would you go to where people aren't like what you're used to? Home. That's where you want to be. Home. And you could say, well, you can make home out anywhere. Well, won't you try it?

I did. I lived in other places, and I'll tell you this. I missed home. Every time I came home to America, I was glad to be there. For his name's sake, they went forth. Then it said they took nothing of the Gentiles.

[6 : 49] Change that word to pagans, and you'll get the idea. They didn't get anything from lost people. They just went out with what God's people would give them. They could have gone over and seen the guy who runs Walmart. You know, that Walmart guy dies, and like the top three or four richest people in the world are still Walmart people.

I mean, when Sam Walden dies, splits up his money, and it's enough in the family to keep them all in the top ten. But they didn't go see him. They didn't go see Bill Gates. They didn't go see the, what's his name, Steve Jobs from Apple and see if they could get money.

They trusted God's people to get God's work done, to go do God's stuff because they went for God. We, therefore, ought to receive such. Let's receive them.

When they come in, let's treat them right. Let's treat them right. Missionaries come in. They're always a little bit strange. Whenever you go to a new place, whenever you're where you're not used to being, it's different.

Let's receive them, and we could be fellow helpers to the truth, that we could be fellow helpers to the truth. So I'd like to give you about three or four things real quickly that I think that would help us, because I do believe you want to help and be a blessing to the missionaries, and so I'd like to go over that.

[7 : 57] Number one, I want to talk to you about forming the bond. And missionaries, I'm going to talk to you just as much as I do the church people, and I hope you'll listen to this. There's some confusion about yoke fellows because some of our missionaries are kind of like vision owes them.

You know, they think they went out of here, and we're supposed to be all of us just catering to their every need and running to them. Well, it's just absolutely ridiculous. Any member thinks that needs to get kicked in the backside.

We're in no church to be a servant, not to get served. Say amen. Anybody in this church that would come to church thinking, everybody ought to be really nice to me. They're lucky to have me. Would be somebody that was really in the flesh.

Would you agree to that? Living in a wrong way. And I'm sure it would do that, be the same. So read with me, if you would, Philippians chapter 2 and verse 25. The Bible said, Yet I suppose it necessary to send to you Ephroditus, my brother, companion in labor, and fellow soldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants.

That's an interesting sentence there. If you'll look at it, he said, I'm sending to you Ephroditus. He's your messenger. He came from you, and he brought a message to me, and he ministered to my wants. He met my needs.

[9 : 06] He met the things I needed. But let me tell you who Ephroditus is. He's my brother. He's my brother. He's my companion in labor, and he's my fellow soldier. To be a yoke fellow, you and the missionary are going to need to form a very good bond before they leave.

I went to the mission field out of my home church, which was the church I started. It wasn't long until I realized I had to leave that church and go join a church where, because of the division, it was causing for the founding pastor to still be a member.

And I joined another church. And to be blunt and honest, I never felt like I was at home, never felt like it was my church, though it was my church. And the pastor has been an extremely good friend to me.

But at church, I didn't ever feel like it was quite my church. But then I didn't have the bond except with the pastor. I had a bond with the pastor, and he has been a very good friend. I didn't have much of a bond. There were a couple of brothers in the church that were always extremely nice to me.

I'll never, ever go to that church without thinking of them and them coming to me and hugging me and being sweet to me. But let's work on some things here. In your Bible, underline brother, companion in labor, fellow soldier.

[10 : 18] To be a yoke fellow, we need to form the bond. Paul called Ephroditus his brother. That will need to be more than the artificial, superficial term that we use for everyone.

Beautiful thing about working in Spanish is we have a word for brother. And I don't know how it got started in the churches, but at church, everybody's at a mano, a brother. And so when you walk into church, and a sister is just the same thing with that A on the end of it.

Philip Basham made it real clear to you our language is extremely easy to learn. And all you got to do is say brother-o and sister-o, and it's all the same thing. But when you go to church, you just walk up, and as soon as you see something, you say, Hey, brother.

Hey, sister. Hey, brother. Hey, sister. That's a whole lot more than that. He said, My brother. You know, I do have a very special relationship with my brother.

I speak to him very frequently. He's my brother. To be honest, he's never been in the ministry, but he's my brother. I just like my brother. I just like my brother.

[11 : 20] I mean, I've known him all his life. I'm several years older than him. I'm going to make a confession here. This shouldn't go out on the live stream. But on the way back from that foreign country called Hawaii, I watched a video.

You know, that's called a film, a movie, or whatever. But it was on my iPad because an airplane, I took the cheapest ride over and the cheapest ride back so they didn't give you anything. It was like, get on the plane and suffer.

Hold your breath till you get there. No oxygen on this plane. Say amen. So I had an iPad. I don't need them. I just downloaded them on my iPad. But I watched a film about a guy in the military who accompanied a dead man home that was killed in action.

And he came home with him, and he went everywhere along the way, and was taught how to treat that family, to treat that dead body. And he took that guy home. And I watched that, and I thought, boy, that's a yoke fellow if I've ever seen it.

He didn't even know him. But by the time it was over, it totally changed him because he had learned so much about that guy. This is a brother. Look at the verse that says, my brother. My brother.

[12 : 24] It's a term of endearment, a special bond. He was a companion in labor. That means somehow they had worked together. They had spent time maybe praying together, maybe out sharing the gospel, out on outreach, doing some ministry together.

He was a fellow soldier. He was a fellow soldier. So there was a high level of respect that Paul felt towards his brother. Isn't the apostle Paul talking? I mean, this is the big guy.

You want to talk about the big guy? He writes a third of the New Testament. But he is the guy who takes the gospel to all the non-Jewish people. He's the guy. And he says, boy, Ephraim, he's a fellow soldier.

He's right in here with me. He must have known that guy. He felt like he was his brother. He felt like he was his companion in labor. He felt like he was a fellow soldier. He was in the war against sin and Satan.

Paul felt that this man could take on ministry and serve God seriously. He didn't see him as a lazy layperson sitting in the pew and not involved in ministry. He really felt like he was a fellow soldier.

[13 : 32] So this for our missionaries and for the church people. The responsibility to form this bond has to go both ways. So you missionaries, would you listen to me? Don't you dare accuse Vision Baptist Church of not loving you when you ain't lovely.

Some of you missionaries, you're like ingrates. You expect this church to do so much for you, but you don't expect to do much for this church.

If you was married, you act that way. Your marriage isn't going to last. I've been going a week. I didn't get to preach in Hawaii. That's one of the reasons I flew out. If they had me preaching, I could have stayed another month.

But I got bored out of my gourd. But the ministry has no right to expect that someone that barely knows him will take a special care of him.

I mean, you could do it a little bit. But for four years, the ministry will have to work at developing relationships with people in our church. You're on deputation for a long time. You come on Thursday nights.

[14 : 31] You can't just be nice to Austin and get to know Austin. You need to know our church people. You need to get around with them. You need to take them out to eat. You need to go out to eat with them. You need to go soul winning with them. They need to be fellow soldiers with you.

If the missionary doesn't make an effort to know people, then they will not develop that special bond. The church members should also work at getting to know the missionaries. It goes both ways. They are our servants, our staff, our sent ones.

So if they're going to go for us, we must love them and work at getting to know them. They're in the Sunday school class with you before they go. They're training center students. Before they go, let's work at getting to know them.

I challenge you to get to know our church missionaries at our own deputation. I ask you as a church to do things together, serve, pray, and have fun with them.

It can't be a one-way street. The words that are used in the verse are fellow and companion. Fellow and companion. My companion in labor.

[15 : 31] That means you did some stuff together. It means you did some stuff together. It means you worked together. Companion, you accompanied the person. Fellow soldier. You were in the battle with him.

You were out knocking on doors with him. You were out cleaning the church building with him. You were doing stuff together. The missionary should work and develop this relationship as well.

The missionary should not be a taker or live expectantly. The missionary should not be a taker or live expectantly. Expectantly. Some may try to demand that you do things for them.

Church members have vision. If they do, politely decline and let them learn the correct way to handle this responsibility. The missionary has no right to be asking you all to do stuff and acting like you're their little gopher.

And I know some can get that way. Best way to handle it is just say, sorry, not interested. Nice day to you. Let them learn to act like a gentleman.

[16 : 28] Amen. It ought to be that way on both sides. This is to be fun and spiritual.

The missionary has to raise enough money for his support, so that means you don't have to buy every meal. You know, the missionaries get used to getting everybody to buy their meal. It ought to be their turn to buy one every now and then. You do not have to provide them with babysitters.

You do not have to meet their every need. They should be men and women of God and not be trying to take advantage of you. So this is goer-sender coalition. That doesn't mean take care of goers. It means it's a coalition.

I'll put something on the table. You put something on the table. That's how we get a coalition going here. Can I get an amen there? I have recently been accused of vision not taking care of missionaries. And so missionaries, listen to the message and pass her around.

Since when do we owe you? These people got a life. And so you'll be, but if you'll be their friend, they'll be your friend. Huh?

[17 : 33] Whew. Betty's homesick and I will be real quick. Home and sick. 1 Corinthians chapter 16 and verse 15, number two. I'm asking our church to addict themselves to the ministry of the saints.

I'm asking you to addict yourself, be addicted. The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 16 and 15, I beseech you, brethren, you know the house of Stephanas, that is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints.

They have dedicated themselves. It's like an addiction. They love being in the ministry. They love serving. That's what ministry means. Ministry means serving. By the way, missionary, if you're in the ministry, it means you're in the service.

That you submit yourselves unto such and to everyone that helps with us, helps with us. Underline that. It's addicted to ministry.

Helped with us and laboreth. I am glad of the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaia, or however you say that guy's name, for that which was lacking on your part, they have supplied.

[18 : 38] They have refreshed my spirit and yours. Therefore, acknowledge ye them that are such. The family of Stephanas had addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints. When they saw a need, they went to work on it without being asked.

These people are like, man, I'm just looking around. What needs done here? Looks like somebody will clean the spot on the carpet. I'm going to take care of that. Looks like a missionary needs a ride to the airport. I'll take care of that. Looks like a bathroom toilet needs fixed.

I'll take care of that. Looks like something else ought to be done. I'll just take care of that. I'm addicted. I like doing it, and I want to do it. They toiled to exhaustion. They refreshed his spirit.

They brought him blessings. How might we addict ourselves to the ministry? We want to make our missionaries feel cared for and understood. Now, I don't want you to think I'm upset with the missionaries.

I'm not upset with the missionaries or you. This is a coalition, so we've both got to be doing our part. If we're talking to anybody in a marriage, I'd say to you that marriage ought to never be 50-50. It ought to be 100-100.

[19 : 35] The man puts in 100%. The woman puts in 100%. I think every missionary ought to put in 100% being your friend, and then we ought to put it in 100%. And somewhere in the middle, we'll all get to liking each other real good.

We'll have a coalition going on all around the world. So, I'm asking you to pray for them regularly. I'm asking you to show them practical love.

I'm asking you to keep them visible before our church. I'm asking you to keep them feeling like vision really is their home church. It's hard. To be out of sight is to be out of mind.

Say it what you want. If you can't love the one you're with, what is it? Can't love it. I can't remember how that thing went, but that's how it works. I went to the mission field. I went to the mission field.

It was either make Peru everything and forget America, and then people in America upset because you forgot America. Of course, it was a day when there wasn't as much communication, but let's work on that. So, I came back to my home church.

[20 : 34] I just didn't feel like I knew them very well. So, let's work at what we can do. You can only help a missionary as much as they're willing to open up to you. You should never do this.

If you're going to be a yoke fellow, it's never out of duty. It's never out of guilt, and it's never out of manipulation. You ought to do it as you work at developing friendships, and I'm challenging the missionaries to work on their part as well.

It would be good if you could develop this relationship with the missionaries on deputation or even as students so that you really know them and you really care about them when they leave. Be amazed how you feel when it's your kid.

You'd be amazed because you know them, and you knew them when they were nobodies, and you knew them when nobody ever thought they'd be ministries in the ministry. You knew them when nobody expected much, but you prayed for much.

So, let's work at making that relationship. Those on furlough need to work with you at developing the relationship. Ultimately, the missionary is responsible for developing this relationship if you will be open to it.

[21 : 36] When you work at communicating with your missionary as much as they work at keeping those lines of communication open, we'll develop a relationship. Here's some practical ideas. Ask them personally, how can I pray for you?

What's going on? If you do it enough, they'll sooner or later be real, they'll think you really mean it. And they'll say to you, man, I'm really hurting. This is what I need help with.

They are in a battle. They do need special help, and they are serving. In my opinion, which you probably won't agree with this, but as much as you may see military service as something, missionary service, you don't go for a one-year tour.

You don't go for a two-year tour. And though they may not be shooting live bullets at you, he is throwing fiery darts at you. When you wake up every day and read the newspaper, you find out how many people got kidnapped or killed the day before in your country, which I did on a regular basis, or the windows get blown out of your house by a bomb, or you've had so many tires stolen off your car that you have no idea if you're buying your own wheels back when you go buy them.

Because you can be sitting in your house, you just pull up and park, walk in for five minutes. Don't park it in the garage because it's only going to be there five minutes. All of a sudden you hear this loud kablang, and you go out and your car is sitting on the ground, no wheels, no tires.

[22 : 56] They can pick them all up and dump your car without it and be gone before you can get out. So how do you pray for them? What are they going through?

Be available for them. They're going through tough times once they prepare to leave. Just to be honest, your missionaries get ready to leave, and they get scared to death. They'd never admit it to you. They want to put on a tough show.

They get scared to death. Their families are scared. What's going on to my children? What's going on to my finances? That's when it would be nice if somebody had a close personal relation. Talk to them about the ministry.

When a missionary comes back, the most exciting thing in his life is what God's done in his life, and no pastor wants to talk to him about it, and no church member wants to talk about it. So when you get together, you've got to talk about the patriots, or you've got to talk about Obama, or you've got to talk about Donald Trump, but there's not going to be much about God doing something in Bosnia.

They ought to be different when they talk to you because they know you are as worried about that country as they are in your heart as much as you can be. Ask them what they're learning and how they're growing.

[23 : 59] Treat them like someone special they are. Have them and others into your home for special get-togethers from their home. Help them to get to know people. Help them when they get back so they can feel like I fit in.

And this church really loves me. I remember walking into Lighthouse Baptist Church in Dawsonville. I'd come home, and Charles Blackstock didn't know me real well, but he knew who I was and knew what I was doing.

He was sitting on a platform. It was a good-sized church, probably running 250 people or something. I walk in the back door, and I'm in the back door coming in with my wife. I'm just going to find a place to sit down. He saw me during the song service.

He stood up, and he walked all the way to the back and hugged me. Everybody in the church knew something weird was going on. He hugged me and told me how glad he was I was there, and then walked back up to the platform. It feels pretty good to know somebody notices when they come home.

That would be nice. Help them to keep up with what's happening at vision. Third thing, Philippians 2.19, another verse. Philippians 2.19. I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you that I may also be of good comfort when I know your statement.

[25 : 04] I don't even know how you're doing. I'm worried about you. I'm worried about you. So I'm sending somebody to find out, and I have only one guy that's like-minded who will naturally care for your state, and that's Timothy, so I'm going to send him.

And I'm asking you as a church to be like-minded and care for their state. I love these guys, and I care about them, and I spend hours, dozens of hours with them getting them ready.

There's too many of them for me to spend enough time, and they get their feelings hurt when I don't spend enough time. So if you could help me, that would really be good if you could. I would drop everything and run to their side if I could.

But if I missed something that one of them is doing, he's always like, you did it for that when you didn't do it for me. So I need your help. You could be like-minded with me and naturally care for them.

Know and treat them like men of God, like a pastor. They may be young. They may not have the experience. But you don't get older and experience without somebody loving you when you don't have any.

[26 : 07] I started a church when I was 23. I look back, and I think, who would ever follow a guy like Bo Carpenter or Austin Gardner when he was that age? But when you get to be my age and people say, how long have you been in ministry?

Bo's going to say 200 years because he started so young, and he's doing so much. But somebody needs to love him. Somebody needs to love him.

Know and treat them like real men of God. You may be older than them and have more experience, but they need someone that believes in them. That's the same with the staff, the pastoral staff here.

The same with the ministries. I just met a pastor that constantly said, there are more bad days in the ministry than good. I listened to him preach, and I thought to myself, I would quit the ministry if I kept listening to you.

And if the ministry was for me what it is for you, I would shoot myself. And if I was one of the church people that had to listen to you, I wouldn't want you to be my pastor because you're saying living with you is I'm being your pastor, and it's really bad.

[27 : 12] I don't feel that way, and I haven't. And I made that comment. I said, I love the ministry, brother. Just thought I'd mention that real quick. He talked about how hard it was.

He talked about how he was mistreated. He was mistreated because he was under 40. He was mistreated because it was his first time as a senior pastor. He was denied service because he's whitened from the mainland.

He said that all the men in the ministry know the feeling. I didn't. I've been doing it 42 years, and I've had some bad days, but I've had a whole lot more good days than bad days.

Church people, don't be controlling or manipulative, even if you think what you're doing is what's best for them. Sometimes when you're a deacon or a pastor or me, we try to help them, but nobody wants another mother or a dad.

I've been married for 42 years also, and sometimes when my wife starts doing some of that mama stuff, I just tell her, if I won't live with my mama, I wouldn't be married to you. And so if you want a good relationship, treat a guy like some respect.

[28 : 29] Just because you're on it to be his daddy. When you're my age, you're on it to be everybody's daddy. Pastors are talking, one of this pastors said, he said, you know, if you've been in the ministry as long as me, and I'm like, so I've been in the ministry as long as you've been alive.

They're looking for a friend and a confidant, a confidant, however you say that. They're looking for someone that will believe in them and hold them up. Do not let them be controlling or manipulative either, because they might think they're a missionary, and they're the one that's really sacrificing.

They should be doing this ministry for the Lord Jesus, and complaining is like praise to the devil, and so they should get a hold of themselves. Every time you say that ministry is more hard days than good days, you're saying, boy, the devil wins more than Jesus does.

I would never want to be guilty of saying that. Say amen. I mean, you may be, you know, if you're in the Super Bowl and you've got some bad plays, you ought to say, I'm going to win in the long run. You've got Jesus as the quarterback and the coach and playing all the points, all the spots on the field.

How can you lose? So you had a rough day. Shut up. Complaining is like praise to the devil, and so they should get a hold of themselves. They need to be a friend as much as they want you to be a friend.

[29 : 51] Work at being there for them, but they must first respond or you are relieved from your duty. Suppose you've tried to contact your missionary 50 times, and he says you don't ever try to contact him, but you know good and well you have.

Here's what I'd say. Well, don't cry anymore. You know, it's a two-way street. I used to fly in from America. My dad lived one mile down the road, and I would fly in to America from Peru, and I'd be in the house I was living in one mile from my dad's house, and my dad said, how come you don't ever come see us?

I said, Dad, every time I see you, I'm the one doing the going. I mean, it's one mile. Your car can come this way as easy as my car can go that way. In fact, as you know this road better than I know this road, and the same airplanes that go that way come this way too.

And so, you know, let's respond and let them respond. For this to work, it requires effort on both sides. Last thing I'd like to say to you.

This work fellow, this yoke fellow thing, be an advocate for your missionary. Really be an advocate. I mean by this, you know, it's not going to be hard for Brett to love Beth Quinn, maybe Sam Quinn will be hard.

[31 : 10] John's probably going to do okay with Catherine Rustelli, maybe Micah, not so much. And then the Littlefields. You know, I noticed when Chuck ever talks about the Littlefield ministry, he said, you know, I found out what my daughter and that guy were doing, you know.

Listen to him. It's easy when it's your kid. It's easy when it's your kid. And you want to keep them in front of the church. These guys all need somebody like that. People that join Vision know they're joining a very unusual church.

I know you care. I know you give. And I know you're looking for how you can be a part. In Philippians 4.10, Paul's talking back to a church that really was a good church to him.

And he said, I rejoice in the Lord greatly that now at the last your care of me has flourished again. They sent him a love offering. When you were all so careful, you always worried about me. You always had me on your mind, but you didn't have opportunity, but you did now and you're taking care of it.

You know, some of our missionaries will be coming home. We only have one church member that's in the States. That's Kevin White right now.

[32 : 20] He doesn't live here. But when he's here, if you get a chance to spend some time with him, that'll be good. This is when we get an opportunity. He'll be back in Bolivia soon. Keep their needs in front of the church. There's a Facebook page and you can put it out there.

You can say, boy, this is what's going on in their ministry. You can repost their stuff or whatever. There's a church blog. You can ask somebody if you can't get their material out to remind the church.

There's a bulletin. You can see if you can't talk to somebody about getting that done. And be available. Be available. I do know what it's like to be a missionary. I know what it's like to grow up a redneck and never, ever really see anybody who is a different color than me.

That's just the honest truth. I grew up in McEwen, Tennessee. That's the place I lived the longest. I was born in Nashville and lived all over the central, the middle Tennessee.

But I spent seventh grade through twelfth grade in one place. We had no Hispanics. We had two black guys. Their nicknames in the yearbook and everything were squeaky and spooky.

[33 : 25] And it wasn't bad. They were heroes. They were ball players. Everybody loved them and respected them. They were the only black guys I'd ever seen in my life. To be honest, we had never seen black people. So when I headed for Mexico, I was so excited until I got to Houston.

But when I got to Houston and my car turned south, I can't explain to you how scared I was. I knew that Mexicans weren't like Tennesseans. I thought I knew this.

You know, I didn't know anything I knew. Because when you're a dumb redneck, you don't know much. And you're so dumb, you don't know you don't know. And so I was scared. I crossed the border and got into Monterrey.

We spent the night. In a Holiday Inn or a Ramada Inn. I can't remember which. And I parked the car inside the fenced lot. And they had a guard out there and everything. But all night long, about every 30 minutes, I got up and looked just to make sure my car was still there.

Because I just knew that Mexicans were going to pick it up and take it away during the night. I had no idea. You understand, I'd never been out of the country except to Haiti one time. And that was scary enough. Next morning, I got up and I was, because he started talking in Spanish.

[34 : 29] I looked at him and said, I don't understand a word. Jail, \$20. Jail, \$20. I said, \$20. I choose \$20. And I got to Mexico.

And after I could talk, I told the guy who helped me so much who now lives in Dalton. He said, if you had have been speeding, the fine was. And I was scared. I was scared. I was terrified to drink out of a Coca-Cola bottle.

I was terrified to go to sleep at night. I was terrified to be in our house. I heard every noise. I smelled everything. I was never so alone in my life. And I had to act real tough all the time. Because Betty didn't want to be there.

So I needed a friend. At that time, I didn't really have any. I hadn't been for a Mexican guy that took me in and taught me and let me know that all the dumb things I've been taught all my life were dumb things I've been taught all my life.

I don't think I'd have made it. And I just want you to know, it's isn't as easy as you think it is. When you see them on deputation, they come up here and they give you a report and they say, well, we were in 12 churches and six more taking us on.

[35 : 30] Everything's looking good. They don't know diddly yet. They have no idea what it's like to spend a night all alone in a foreign country. You say, well, I've done it. Yeah, you didn't do it like they do it.

It's a big deal when you're in a hotel or you got a ticket on the way out and you don't have to worry about can you talk and somebody's there to interpret for you. It's a whole different ballgame.

I can remember going to church in Mexico and the song leader, his name was Chewy, and he was a great guy. And once I learned how to talk, I found out he was a great guy. But he liked to pick on me.

And so he would, every time he'd go, he would say, puestos de pie, and he'd look at me and say, stand up, Guillermo, stand up. And I would say, and then he'd say, I told him, Austin, sit down, sit down.

And I can remember thinking, I had been a pastor 13 years. To be treated like this, it's a little beyond my dignity. And he was like, you can't even talk, kindergartner.

[36 : 28] It's a weird feeling. They need your friendship. It's stress on their wife. It's stress on their children. And the fears that God won't take care of them, all the junk they may preach has to be lived now.

So I really appreciate you doing it. The missionaries, I would say to you, it's hard to like you when you ain't likable. It's hard to like you when you don't do your end of it.

It's hard to like you when all you want to do is be critical of us. This is a good church. They love you, and they're doing their best to help you. So start acting like it. Can I get a deacon to say amen?

I mean, it's a big deal. So we're in this together. It's a coalition. That means we'll both come to the table. I can speak, I think, for the deacons and the leadership of vision.

They're on your side. And they'll love you, and they'll help you. But you do have to bring something to the table. And just because you say, well, I'm going to go learn another language and speak in another country, that's not enough.

[37 : 36] Friendships don't work that way. Friendships don't work that way. So let's both take care of our end of it. Now, how many of you mad at me? Just say amen right now. I think I'll go to Hawaii. I think I would go bonkers if I went to Hawaii again.

One lady told me, she said, I live in Hawaii, and I feel like I'm trapped. She said, back when I lived in the States, I could drive forever. She said, you can't do that here. I said, it seemed like forever, though.

Man, they dropped so many people I've ever been around in my life. I'm glad to be with you, and I'm glad you're here tonight. I'm glad this is a coalition, and I'm asking you to help us work together to carry the gospel.

This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. For more information, log on to www.visionbaptist.com, where you can find our service times, location, contact information, and more audio and video recordings.

Thanks.