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Virginia Baptist Bible Fellowship

Church Planter Support Strategy

I. Our Objective

It is the intention of the men of the *Virginia Baptist Bible Fellowship* to effectively partner with sending churches in the planting and establishment of independent Baptist churches throughout the state of Virginia. We believe that God's great commission mandates the necessity of planting and establishing local New Testament churches. We believe it is our privilege and our duty, as the Virginia fellowship, to accept responsibility for Virginia. There is perhaps no greater use of our combined efforts and resources as a fellowship, than in assisting churches in the planting and establishing of new independent Baptist churches throughout our state of Virginia.

A. God's Agenda

Matthew 16:18 "...I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

B. Each Church's Mandate

Matthew 28:18-20 ¹⁸And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. ¹⁹Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: ²⁰Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

C. The Fellowship's Privilege

Proverbs 27:17 "Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend."

This strategy is intended to serve as a tool to guide us in this effort. This strategy is a working document and should be re-evaluated on a regular basis to ensure maximum effectiveness.

NOTE 1: The Virginia fellowship is not a denomination. We are not a sending agency. We do not commission/ordain/recommend (verify credentials or credibility of) men for ministry. We believe that Biblical authority for the aforementioned has been given to the local church only. Therefore this fellowship will partner with churches as they send their men for this critical ministry.

In the event that the fellowship should be petitioned for support by an individual without a legitimate sending church, the fellowship will consider assistance in finding an effective sending church as a prerequisite to any further assistance.

NOTE 2: Each church planter should be handled on an individual, personal basis. A general framework for assistance has been established by the fellowship (this *Church Planter Support Strategy* handbook). This handbook provides the parameters within which a personal support plan may be developed for each church planter (see Appendix #3).

NOTE 3: Definitions:

"Sending Church" = the church that sends a family out from their membership to plant a new church. This church will mentor the family and monitor the progress of the new church.

"Mentoring Church" = in the event that the sending church is not located in Virginia or is not able to provide the mentoring and monitoring that new church plant needs, we will, if the church planter desires, help him establish a relationship with a Virginia church to serve as a mentoring church. In this case the mentoring church will fulfill the service of the sending church.

“Church Planter” = the man who is sent to establish the new church and will become it’s pastor when the church is organized.

“VBBF Resource Team” = the team of VBBF pastors who coordinate and manage our church planting efforts. This group will operate within the established parameters of this strategy document. One member of the team will be assigned as a liaison between the resource team and the church planter for each church planting project. See Appendix #3 for further details regarding the operation of the resource team.

For a more detailed statement of our philosophy as a fellowship, see *III. Our Multi-Church Comradery*.

II. Our Process

The VBBF church planter support strategy will provide assistance and support for Virginia church planters.

The fellowship *VBBF Resource Team* and our pre-established framework and boundaries for support will allow us to respond to each church planter on an individual, personal basis. The following represents a process for partnering with sending churches and their church planters.

A. Pre-application Interview

The VBBF Resource Team will conduct a pre-application interview with the church-planting candidate and his sending church’s pastor. This interview is intended to help prospective candidates and their sending church’s pastor to understand the fellowship in general, our objectives as it pertains to supporting church planters, and the resources we offer as it pertains to church planting in Virginia. This will allow all parties (the sending church, the church planter, and the fellowship) to determine whether or not there is a desire to partner in a church plant effort.

1. Content

The following represents the minimum content for the interview:

- a. Define the BBFI and the VBBF — define for the purpose of insuring that the applicants for church planter support know to whom they are applying, that we will be yoking together on this project, and that they have a genuine desire to do so.
- b. Define the Purpose of the VBBF
- c. Define the Purpose of the VBBF Church Planter Support Strategy
- d. Define the VBBF Church Planter Support Strategy

Clarify that the VBBF is:

- not a denomination
- not a New Testament church with the authority to call, ordain, commission, or send out men
- not a sending agency

Note: One of the first efforts on the part of the VBBF Resource Team may be to assist the candidate in meeting as much of the selection criteria as possible.

2. Criteria for partnering

- a. VBBF absolutes for selection (these absolutes are non-negotiable) are the *Twenty Articles of Faith*.

- b. VBBF preferences for selection (these preferences will be given serious consideration and will weigh heavily on the selection decision)
 - (1) Membership in a strong, committed, currently active VBBF Church
 - (2) Has a seed group of families/individuals
 - (3) Needy geographic location (independent Baptist representation in the area)
 - (4) Ministry experience (amount of effective ministry experience)

B. Application

1. Application Submission

Written applications will be submitted to the VBBF Resource Team.

- a. From the sending church (see Appendix #1)
- b. From the church planter (see Appendix #2)

2. VBBF Resource Team will:

- a. Discuss the potential partnership.
- b. Determine the financial support level and duration needed (see Appendix 3).
 - (1) Determine the actual needs of the church planter (some may need significant financial help, others minimal).
 - (2) Consider a standard financial support level with some flexibility.
 - (3) Consider a standard financial support duration with some flexibility.
- c. Decide on the resource team member who will serve as the liaison.
- d. Vote on whether to recommend this partnership to the fellowship officers.

C. Approval

The officers of the fellowship will consider the resource team recommendation and vote on whether to recommend this partnership to the fellowship.

Final approval will be given by the fellowship by vote at a regularly scheduled meeting.

D. Pre-Start Helps

This section is for candidates that have:

- applied for VBBF church planter support
- been approved for church planter support, and
- are planning and preparing for their initial start.

This is a menu of some options the fellowship may attempt to provide.

1. Encourage participation with NCPO

- a. Act as a liaison between the church planter and the NCPO
- b. Provide the necessary resources to attend the *NCPO Church Planter School*

2. Challenge and encourage the initial church-planting seed group

- a. Set-up a special function (banquet, layman's church planting seminar, retreat, etc.).
- b. Provide special speakers.
- c. Motivate/encourage the team.
- d. Communicate the enthusiasm of the fellowship for their commitment.

3. Assist in determining and assimilating basic needs

- a. Meeting place
- b. Seating
- c. Curriculum

- d. Music
- e. Sound equipment
- f. Songbooks
- g. Insurance
- h. Multi-media
- i. Etc.

4. Assist in establishing effective foundational documents

- a. Statement of Faith
- b. Constitution & By-Laws
- c. Purpose
- d. Church Covenant

5. Participate in flyer/invitation distribution

- a. Supporting churches
- b. Youth groups
- c. Sunday School classes
- d. *VBBF Resource Team*

E. Post-Start Helps

1. Financial support

- a. Monitor/reevaluate the previously established support plan periodically. This monitoring should be accomplished by the sending church and communicated through the resource team.
- b. Consider allowing changes in financial status to be considered.
- c. Consider one time gifts and special needs/projects to be considered for funds.
- d. Consider funding (partial or full) cost of training, education, exposure ops, etc.

2. Logistical support

- a. Useable info should be compiled and organized about basic needs:
 - (1) legal status,
 - (2) financial handling procedures,
 - (3) insurance requirements,
 - (4) options/recommendations,
 - (5) bulk mailing,
 - (6) guidelines for honorarium,
 - (7) protocol for hosting guests/missionaries,
 - (8) how to conduct a missions conference,
 - (9) how to have a revival service,
 - (10) how to have a stewardship campaign,
 - (11) Sunday School Curriculum,
 - (12) seminars,
 - (13) enlisting workers,
 - (14) leadership training,
 - (15) salary, housing allowance, Social Security,
 - (16) accounting,
 - (17) etc.
- b. Good working equipment may be available for donation:
 - (1) computers,
 - (2) copiers,
 - (3) sound equipment,

- (4) seating,
 - (5) desks,
 - (6) etc.
- c. Good training materials may be available for donation or loan:
- (1) video series,
 - (2) music
 - (3) musicals,
 - (4) curriculum,
 - (5) books,
 - (6) hymnals,
 - (7) nursery needs,
 - (8) etc.
- d. Manpower may be coordinated for special projects:
- (1) building,
 - (2) construction,
 - (3) clean up,
 - (4) literature distribution,
 - (5) etc.

3. Personal support

- a. General Counsel – a contact to call with questions or needs
- b. Specific Counsel – their contact may be able to coordinate help with discouragement, personal struggles, family/marital [as it pertains to church planting], etc.
- c. Speakers – fellowship pastors with expertise/enthusiasm in specific areas may be able to provide dynamic, powerful teaching/motivation, help establish solid foundations.

Example: Soul Winning – Giving – Serving – Leadership – Equipping – Pastoral Care – Worship – Missions – Marriage/Family – Revival – Prayer – etc.

Some may be able to conduct seminars, participate in campaigns, special training, ministry fairs, etc.

- d. Counsel regarding the timing and planning of the official organization of the church with it's charter membership. This counsel will be offered to the sending church.

III. Our Multi-Pastor Comradery

The VBBF church planter support strategy will provide opportunities for all fellowship pastors to participate.

A. Shared Work

There will be opportunities for each fellowship pastor/church to use their unique resources to actively participate in the VBBF church planter support effort. Many of our fellowship pastors have planted and/or participated in planting new churches themselves. There are literally thousands of years of pastoral experience represented in our fellowship. Our fellowship should be an invaluable resource for planting new churches in Virginia!

1. **Every fellowship pastor is unique and has something unique to offer**
2. **Every fellowship pastor is encouraged to make church planting in Virginia a personal priority in their ministry**
3. **Every fellowship pastor is encouraged to determine and develop his individual potential, resources and abilities to participate in the fellowship church planting efforts**
4. **Every fellowship pastor is encouraged to take an active role in this church planting effort by responding to needs and opportunities as determined and coordinated by the *VBBF Resource Team*.**

Note: As with any involvement in the fellowship, though all are encouraged to participate, each fellowship pastor must determine if, and to what extent, he will participate.

B. Shared Foundation

It is the position of this fellowship that God has given the authority to equip, ordain, commission, and send out men for the work of the ministry to the local church. It is the local church that plants churches. Therefore, the VBBF will assume a support role. We will come alongside and partner with the sending/mentoring church and the church planter to provide assistance and support in this effort. This is our foundation.

C. Shared Principles

The VBBF church planter support strategy has been initiated based on the following key principles:

1. **We have a clear focus, a clear objective**
To partner with, and support, local New Testament Baptist churches and church planters in the planting and establishing of local New Testament Baptist churches. Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 5:25
2. **We have the proper foundation on which to build**
The proper foundation has already been laid. A new foundation is not needed. As independent Baptists we trace our heritage back to the foundation of the apostles, and of Jesus Christ Himself. Any assistance or church planter support from this fellowship will be provided to continue building on this, the proper foundation. I Corinthians 3: 9-11; Ephesians 2:19-21

Our VBBF independent Baptist churches are built on this, the proper foundation. We will continue to plant and build new churches on this, the proper, existing foundation.
3. **We have a real commitment to accomplishing the task**
We recognize the significance of planting new churches as it pertains to fulfilling the great commission. We must be willing to invest of our time, talent, and treasure to be of any real support in this effort. Just as faith without works is dead, so is an agenda to

plant churches without a commitment to do the work needed to accomplish the task. Galatians 6:9-10; James 1:22

4. We must support one another and participate in this great work, this great calling, this great opportunity

We recognize that our independent status restricts us from having authority over one another. It does not, however, restrict us from working together. Each of us is very unique and Divinely gifted. It is when we work together that we are at our strongest. We must use our resources and our experience to help one another. Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

5. As the Virginia fellowship, we accept responsibility to reach Virginia with the gospel

We are committed to assisting sending/mentoring churches in planting and supporting new churches throughout Virginia. If the Virginia fellowship doesn't support church planting in Virginia, then who will? Acts 1:8

We will actively participate with sending/mentoring churches in the planting and establishment of effective local New Testament churches throughout Virginia by:

- a. Yoking up, and working together
- b. Pooling our resources
- c. Active involvement with sending/mentoring churches and church planters
- d. Identifying, organizing, and disbursing fellowship resources effectively
- e. Committing to the long term success of these new churches

D. Shared Team — The *VBBF Resource Team*

A fellowship church-planting resource team (the *VBBF Resource Team*) will be assembled to assume responsibility for the ongoing development, oversight and administration of the fellowship church planter support strategy. This team will work within the established parameters of the fellowship strategy. They will not establish the strategy. They will carry out the strategy.

1. General responsibilities

- a. Assume responsibility for the management of the strategy
- b. Identify fellowship and other resources
- c. Manage fellowship and other resources
- d. Report to officers and fellowship on a regular basis
- e. Determine individual sending church and church planter needs
- f. Coordinate and oversee the implementation of this strategy document
- g. Monitor and propose revision of the operational parameters as needed

2. Specific responsibilities to fellowship pastors

- a. Provide assistance/support to fellowship pastors that are sending churches as needed/desired
- b. Promote the strategy and enlist the support of fellowship pastors
- c. Develop, distribute, and collect an involvement and resource survey from every fellowship pastor
- d. Maintain a working file of fellowship resources
- e. Act as coordinator/liason between church planters with needs and fellowship pastors with resources
- f. Acquire, maintain, distribute supplies/etc. as needed – equipment, furniture, books, teaching series/curriculum, vehicles, music, misc., etc.
- g. Establish and maintain a collection of working documents – Constitution, By-

- laws, Charter, Covenant, etc.
- h. Establish and maintain a listing of vendors – insurance companies, curriculum publishers, retirement, financial institutions, etc.
 - i. Establish and maintain a catalog of general helps – guidelines for pastoral compensation, general tax / IRS info, care of guests (honorarium, housing, meals, gifts, etc.), VA policies for incorporation/licensing/trustees/issues pertaining to churches, fellowship missionaries/evangelists, etc.

Appendix 1 *Application from the Sending Church Pastor*

Prepare a document that provides the following information and answers the following questions.

Sending Church Data

1. Church name
2. Pastor's name
3. Contact information (address, phone numbers, email, etc.)
4. Years as pastor of the sending church
5. Did you plant this church?
6. Years as pastor of Baptist churches

Sending Church Relationship to Church Plant

1. Will the sending church be financially supporting this project? To what extent?
2. Will the sending church's pastor be monitoring the progress of the church plant? How often and to what extent?
3. Will the sending church's pastor be mentoring the church planter?

Church Plant

1. Describe the geographic area of the church plant in terms of its need for a church.
2. Describe the seed group of individuals/families who will be forming the core of the new church.

Relationship with VBBF

1. Do you understand the VBBF?
2. Do you agree with the philosophical basis of the VBBF?
3. List your disagreements or concerns with the VBBF
4. How many meetings of the VBBF have you attended in the last year?
5. Do you intend to attend meetings of the VBBF in the future?
6. How can the VBBF help the sending church in this church plant?

Appendix 2 *Application from the Church-Planter*

Prepare a document that provides the following information and answers the following questions.

Personal Data

1. Your name
2. Your wife
3. Your children
4. Your contact information (address, phone numbers, email, etc.)

Experience

1. How long have you been in the ministry full-time?
2. Have you planted a church before?
3. Describe your ministry experience.
4. Are you a member of your sending church?
5. How long have you been a member of the sending church?
6. What have been your responsibilities in the sending church?

Church Plant

1. New church's legal name.
2. New church's name for advertising.
3. Describe the geographic area of the church plant in terms of it's need for a church.
4. Describe the seed group of individuals/families who will be forming the core of the new church.
5. Describe the type of ministry you envision the new church having.
6. Describe your personal beliefs regarding trends of the day in evangelical circles. (i.e. – “broader grace” teaching, are Catholics saved?, doctrineless market-driven Christianity, no-repentance salvation, etc.)

Relationship with VBBF

1. Do you understand the VBBF?
2. Do you agree with the philosophical basis of the VBBF?
3. List your disagreements or concerns with the VBBF.
4. How many meetings of the VBBF have you attended in the last year?
5. Do you intend to attend meetings of the VBBF in the future?
6. How can the VBBF help the sending church in this church plant?

VBBF Resource Team Operation

It will be the responsibility of the elected officers to appoint the team and monitor their service to the fellowship.

Financial Support Basis

1. Monthly Support – a ceiling of \$14,850 per project
 - \$1,000 per month 12 months
 - \$850 for the 13th month
 - \$700 for the 14th month
 - \$550 for the 15th month
 - \$400 for the 16th month
 - \$250 for the 17th month
 - \$100 for the 18th month
2. Financial Support Duration – a maximum duration of 18 months
3. Special Financial Needs – the VBBF Resource Team is authorized to consider and grant up to a maximum of \$500 per church plant project for special needs.

These are maximum limits approved by the fellowship. The VBBF Resource Team will customize the exact program within these limits. Any needs beyond these limits must be approved by the fellowship.