

# VOICE Missions Handbook

# Defining Your Mission

All too often when we commit ourselves to something, we do not prepare our heart or emotions for the long haul. As the saying goes, “when the going gets tough, the tough get going” or even better, “where there is no vision, the people perish.” (Proverbs 19:18) So how do we equip ourselves so that we do not fall to the wayside once the “winds” really begin to blow?

We can help accomplish this by defining our vision, and establishing what our mission is for the battle we are about to enter. How do you know God has called you to Taiwan? Are you trusting God with the “big picture”, and eagerly waiting to see how He’s going to work in you and through you? Have you set some clear goals for yourself before entering the “battleground”?

We would challenge you to think through these things. Know where you stand; know what you stand on; know Who you stand in. Your personal Mission Statement will not only set the tone for your year - it will define your ministry.

With everything that our King wants to accomplish in and through our lives this year, we cannot afford to stall the process by choosing to walk in our flesh.

# Team Life

You are living and serving in Taiwan as a member of the VOICE Missions team. You may or may not have VOICE Missions teammates or HTC coworkers living with you at your location. No matter whether you are living alone or with others, we encourage you to promote a spirit of teamwork and support. Below are some points for you to consider in your interactions with those around you.

## **Basic expectations:**

### ● **You must carry your share of responsibilities:**

Each location has many different responsibilities, from cooking team meals to cleaning the dorm to participating in work projects for your sponsor. You must be willing to pitch in, share the load and live as a responsible person.

### ● **You must respect your teammates and coworkers.**

Like it or not, the people around you are very different from you. Even if you have other VOICE Missions teachers at your location, they are probably from a different family, church, and sub-culture than you, and may act and react very differently than you. Despite this you must show respect for all those around you, both teammates and coworkers alike.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- Listening to their viewpoint and trying to see issues from their perspective.
- Never giving up on them or “writing them off” when conflicts arise.
- Not gossiping about them.
- Keeping conversations respectful.
- Working towards a solution when conflicts or disagreements arise.
- Serve, care, and love them as Christ’s representative.

# Ministry

You are in Taiwan to minister to the people of Taiwan. This is the main reason why you are here! Different people may be called to do different kinds of ministry, but the important thing is to focus on whatever area of ministry God has called you to pursue.

## **Basic expectations:**

### Ø **You must demonstrate a willingness to involve yourself in ministry:**

You are not here to simply serve yourself, you are here to serve the people of Taiwan. As a VOICE Missions volunteer, you must demonstrate a willingness to pursue ministry. Also, refrain from consuming alcohol or using drugs during your time in Taiwan.

### Ø **You must find and attend a local church:**

The local church is where you will find many opportunities for ministry. While it may be difficult to attend a church when you do not understand the language, you will find that connecting with a local body of believers will help you find many ministry opportunities. We encourage you to talk with the pastor to request translation. Meanwhile learn to worship God in the spirit and truth.

# Dress Guidelines

Like it or not, because you are a foreigner, you will stand out. How you dress conveys what you think of yourself and what you think of your job. It is therefore particularly important to maintain a professional appearance when teaching and when meeting/interacting with school faculty.

## Professional Dress

### **For Teaching**

- Young men should wear clean, collared shirts without large logos or printed messages. Pants must be clean-cut and professional and worn with a belt. Shoes or sandals should be conservative and suited for walking. No sleeveless shirts, baggy pants, sweatpants, shorts, or flip flops. Business casual is a great guideline.
- Young ladies should wear modest shirts without plunging necklines. Tops should not be tight-fitting or revealing. Make sure your shirt is long enough to cover your waistline. No sleeveless shirts. Skirts should fall below the knee. If a skirt has a slit, it should not rise above the knee. Pants must be clean-cut and professional. Shoes and sandals should be suited for walking. No flip flops or shorts. Business casual is a good guideline.

### **For Special Occasions** (e.g. Graduations/Meeting government officials):

Please be prepared to show respect by dressing formally.

## Sponsor Guidelines

Your sponsor may at times make special dress guidelines and/or ask you to dress more professionally than the VOICE Missions guidelines specify. In this situation you are required to comply with your sponsor's dress guidelines.

## Casual Dress

During weekends and non-teaching hours, t-shirts, modest pants, capris, or shorts may be worn. Modest sleeveless shirts may be worn, but girls should not wear spaghetti-strap tank tops or dresses.

When you are not at school, it is still important that you present an appropriate and modest appearance within the local communities. Out of respect for those around you, don't dress like a slob.

# Housing Guidelines

Back in America, your home would be considered private territory. Here in Taiwan, it belongs to the school, so school faculty may exercise the right to enter and inspect your living quarters without warning. It is therefore vital to be sensitive to the issues that are important to them, so that your lifestyle can be a testimony to them.

Each housing situation in Taiwan is different according to each county. Some are set up dormitory-style, while elsewhere there may be an apartment or house that a team will share. Regardless of the setup, you will likely be living with others who have an entirely different outlook. Although this will cause some new experiences, make sure you take the time to learn and appreciate the various cultures and personalities around you.

### **Bedroom / Bathroom**

There will be no visiting between guys' and girls' rooms. Please respect the generosity of your sponsor by keeping your room neat and clean. Likewise, please make a plan for taking out the trash, sweeping the floor, and cleaning the bathroom on a regular basis.

Be sure to turn off the A/C when you leave and when it is not needed.

### **Kitchen**

Please keep the kitchen orderly by washing dishes immediately and taking out the trash every day – if possible. If you live with others, you may want to discuss together and create a system to ensure this happens without placing the main burden on any one person.

### **Living Room**

Due to the public nature of this room, please keep your personal items in your room, so that this room is always presentable.

Please also be aware of how your activities may be interpreted by unexpected visitors. Be careful to keep your interpersonal interaction and your choice of entertainment above reproach.

## **Entertainment Guidelines**

Entertainment has long been the center of much controversy within Christian circles. There are many ways to approach this issue, but our main desire is to challenge you to guard your walk with Christ—make sure nothing robs you of the joys of intimate fellowship with the Lord. Likewise, we want you to guard against anything that might hinder you from being effective servants of God. Towards that end, instead of guidelines, we'd like to give you a list of questions to help you evaluate the place entertainment should have in your life and on your team.

### **Music**

As a general rule, do not play questionable music in public (anywhere where others can hear it). The following questions apply to personal music:

- Does this music edify me?
- Is this music taking up too much of my time?
- Is it hindering my testimony/ministry?
- If the Lord were to ask me to give up my music, could I do it?
- Should I be spending time talking to someone else?
- Am I unapproachable when wearing headphones?

### **TV/Movies/Video Games/Internet/Reading Material**

- Is this affecting my relationship with the Lord?
- Have I completed all my work responsibilities?
- Do I need to work on other ministry opportunities?
- Is it hindering my testimony/ministry?
- Am I getting enough rest?
- Should I be spending time talking to someone else?
- How is this activity affecting those living with me?
- Are my chores done?
- Do I need to write/call home?

# General Guidelines

## Housing:

- Be sensitive to school/sponsor provided property. (Turn off lights, computers, AC, heaters, etc. whenever they are not being used.)
- Be responsible to follow school procedure for visits between team locations.
- If you have overseas visitors, please inform VOICE Missions Leadership.

## Travel:

- Do not drive a motorcycle or moped. Do not ride a motorcycle or moped driven by anyone other than an HTC teacher.
- Wear a helmet when riding a bicycle.
- If you want to travel outside the country or to the surrounding islands of Taiwan, check with VOICE Missions before booking your tickets.
- If you wish to drive a car in Taiwan, you must register your International Driver's License in Taiwan within the first 30 days. If you fail to do this, you are considered an unlicensed driver and will be subject to fines and prosecution.

## Sponsor:

- Be discreet with what your sponsor has provided. (Doctor visits, sick days, days off... etc.)
- Be on time with handing in your passport for visa renewals.
- Be grateful for the time and work that is done on your behalf.
- You are not allowed to be employed by any other schools, cram schools, families, etc. other than the schools run by your sponsor. Because you are here on a visitor's visa, it is illegal to receive monetary reimbursement for any service or work. Doing so can result in deportation from the country! Tutoring should only be done on a voluntary or language exchange basis. People with a visitor or volunteer visas are prohibited from receiving any money or gifts for private tutoring.
- Be aware that the return date listed on your plane ticket may not be your actual return date. Your VOICE Missions commitment is for approximately eleven months, and usually includes facilitating winter and summer camps, in addition to your regular teaching.

## Ministry:

- Find a local church and attend weekly whenever possible.

# Cultural Guidelines

In addition to the above guidelines, every culture has its unspoken rules of acceptable/unacceptable behavior. These rules are, unfortunately, not always identifiable or reasonable. As a guest in this culture, it is important to understand the mentality of the people you are serving, so you can avoid offending them unintentionally.

## Be Safe.

Taiwan is a safe country, but, just like any other location, caution is encouraged. Theft can be a problem, but usually only occurs when belongings are left unattended. Keep in mind that Taiwanese

people generally err on the side of caution. They will expect you to be equally (if not more) cautious, especially because your sponsor is paying for your insurance. Since riding a moped is unsafe, you are only permitted to ride mopeds driven by your HTC coworkers.

### **Be Healthy.**

It won't take long for you to discover that Taiwanese people worry about whether or not you're eating enough (or eating right), whether or not you're wearing enough, whether or not you're sleeping enough, and whether or not you're exercising enough. If at all possible, do not give them occasion to worry. If you cannot adjust to the food at school, make sure to bring your own lunch to prove that you are not merely trying to skip meals.

### **Be Resourceful.**

Waste is one of the cardinal sins in Taiwan. Please take extra pains to sort your trash, so that recyclables can be collected. Likewise, remember to turn off all lights /AC units, heaters, computers, etc. when leaving.

### **Be Considerate.**

In the Taiwanese social system, people tend to cater to those in authority over them. Make every effort to honor the wishes and plans of your supervisors. Think twice before you ask your Taiwanese authorities for a favor—make sure to keep your request clear and simple, so they only need to take care of it once. Be gracious and grateful when asking any Taiwanese for a favor—graciousness goes a long way.

## **What to Expect**

### **Living Allowance**

Teachers will receive a stipend of approximately \$800 USD per month.

### **Housing Situation**

Your sponsor has provided housing for your team in each respective county. Your living quarters should already include a washing machine, refrigerator, microwave, toaster oven, air conditioning units, furniture, etc.

Your schools will provide lunch for you during the week.

### **Daily Life**

When not teaching, planning lessons, attending Bible studies, or having Chinese class, you will have free time for grocery shopping, cleaning, and meeting with Taiwanese friends, etc. Occasionally, your sponsor will set up teaching activities or cultural outings for your team. Sometimes, you may be given little advance notice of these activities and may be expected to be available to go. As with many things in Taiwan – flexibility is vital!

# Frequently Asked Questions

## **What will the weather be like in Taiwan?**

March–October: High temperature and humidity, massive rainfall, and typhoons.

November–February: Expect cooler weather with high humidity. The temperature may occasionally dip below 40° Fahrenheit. Teachers should bring warm clothing, as the wet Taiwan wind can be strong and cold in the winter, and the buildings generally do not use heaters.

## **Do I need to have any medical shots?**

Shots are not required for a visit to Taiwan, but for a year-long visa, proof of MMR immunization will be required. A current (within the past five years) tetanus vaccination and Hepatitis A and B vaccinations may also be wise.

## **Is the water safe?**

While you can brush your teeth and cook with tap water, drinking it isn't advised. It is better to get water from purified water machines, which should be available at each school, or purchase it from a convenience store.

## **Do I need to set up a bank account?**

Many of our volunteers set up local bank accounts upon arrival. However, volunteers under the age of 20 may have difficulty opening an account.

## **How much money should I bring?**

Bring \$350-500 USD to tide you over until you receive your first stipend, possibly 1-2 months. (Make sure that your dollar bills are newer, with no marks or writing, and "crisp," as older bills are harder to exchange in Taiwan.) Travelers Checks and money cards are not a good idea.

## **What types of communication do I have access to?**

Keeping in touch with friends and family is quite easy. Cell phones can be purchased for a decent price in Taiwan. You should be able to purchase reasonable phone cards at any local convenience store so you can make international phone calls from your cell phone. Skype, Facebook, Google Hangouts, and other computer programs/phone apps are also very affordable ways to keep in touch! Your dorm and/or office will be equipped with internet access, so you will be able to write home.

## **Will I be allowed to share the Gospel at school?**

While you are not permitted to share the Gospel in class except when teaching holiday classes such as Christmas or Easter, we encourage you to live out your faith and actively build relationships with teachers and students, so that they will ask for a reason for the hope within you. In those one-on-one situations, it would be appropriate to give a Chinese tract or Bible. Sharing about the Gospel through American culture (i.e. Christmas, Easter, Thanksgiving, family life, etc.) is an acceptable way to begin conversations with your students. Be bold, and look for opportunities to link God into conversations and topics.

It may also be wise to read up on Buddhism and Taoism from a Christian perspective, in order to understand the mindset of many Taiwanese.

## **Will I receive Chinese Lessons?**

Chinese classes and/or language exchange will be set up once you arrive in Taiwan. It would be wise to begin learning the language now, so that you can at least familiarize yourself with Mandarin. (Should you decide to start studying Mandarin, you may find it helpful to know that there are two variations of characters - simplified and traditional. Traditional is the writing

system used in Taiwan.) The Taiwanese people always appreciate foreigners who make the attempt to speak their native tongue!

### **May I host overseas guests?**

Please check with your sponsor and VOICE Missions before scheduling an overseas guest. A few things to keep in mind:

Please provide all relevant parties with the names of the guests, dates of stay, arrival/departure times, and flight numbers.

Please be prepared to cover any food, lodging, or event expenses incurred during their stay. All guests should be prepared to honor sponsor/housing guidelines and come with a ministry mindset.

## **Authority Structure**

All of the VOICE Missions Teams fall under the jurisdiction of IBLP Taiwan. A general overview of the organizational authority structure as follows:

### **Operational Authority Structure:**

Director: *Stephen Chen*

TESOL Coordinator: *Timothy Chen*

### **Authority Synopsis:**

For living conditions and local needs, consult your ETAT (the person at your local school responsible for taking care of the foreign teachers).

For work or ministry-related needs (schools, camps, flights, vacations, challenges with sponsors, focus/direction, guidelines, etc.), consult with VOICE Missions leadership.

## **Contact Information**

### **Director**

Stephen Chen: schen@iblp.org

Cell: (886)933-120-001

### **IBLP Taiwan**

14F-3, 95 Roosevelt Rd, Sec 2

Taipei, Taiwan 10646 ROC

10646台北市羅斯福路二段95號14樓-3

PHONE: (886-2) 2363-2584 Extensions: Dr. Chen(107), Tim (108), FAX: (886-2) 2363-2144

### **Leadership Team/VOICE Missions Coordinators**

**Timothy Chen** timothy@tw.iblp.org

Taiwan Cell: (886) 938-180-001

\*Please note that when dialing a Taiwan phone number from within Taiwan, omit the country code (886), and then add "0" (e.g., Stephen Chen: 09-3312-0001)

# Standard Procedures

- **I want to travel on the main island of Taiwan.**
  - Inform your ETAT. (Make sure to tell them where you will be, and what time you plan to leave and return. If done during your off time, this is not a matter of getting permission, but rather simply practicing good habits of safety.)
  
- **I want to travel internationally, or to an outlying island.**
  - Inform your ETAT about your plans.
  - Complete the VOICE Missions international travel form – [www.voicemissions.org/forms/internationaltravel.php](http://www.voicemissions.org/forms/internationaltravel.php)
  
- **My family wants to visit.**
  - Inform your ETAT (If they plan on staying at your team location, you must follow your school's procedures!)
  - Inform Tim Chen.
  
- **I want information about my return ticket.**
  - Contact Tim Chen
  
- **I want to take time off.**
  - Discuss it with your ETAT first.
  - Follow the procedures outlined by your sponsor or school.
  
- **I want to ask for an exception from a VOICE Missions rule.**
  - Discuss it with Tim Chen.
  - AFTER you have discussed it with Tim, contact Dr. Chen. An exception to a rule is granted in special situations as we try to discern God's will together.

# Packing List

You can find almost everything you'll need in Taiwan. The following list was compiled by VOICE Missions veterans to help you pack for the coming school year:

## Suggested Items:

- Clothing and a coat for cold weather (Although Taiwan is tropical, it gets fairly cold in the winter and your dorms and schools will probably not be heated. The constant wet cold in winter will probably chill you to the bone! Coats are easily purchasable in Taiwan, if you're saving on packing space.)
- Underwear. (Guys and Girls) While underwear is very easy to purchase it may be difficult to find brands that are comfortable.
- 100% cotton T-shirts, for those who prefer them (they're harder to find in Taiwan)
- Deodorant (only a few brands can be found in Taiwan)
- (Girls) Makeup that you are familiar with (Although it is readily available in Taiwan, quality makeup can be expensive)
- Small gifts for your coworkers, people at your church, and other friends (gifts such as pictures, postcards, and souvenirs from America, etc. would be appropriate).
- Candy is also a fun gift, and it's hard to find Smarties, Reese's PB cups, Airheads, and Starbursts in Taiwan. (Please note that due to school policy, you will usually not be permitted to give candy to your students There may be exceptions during holidays)
- Personal medicine, vitamins, pain killers. (Benadryl, Tylenol, Ibuprofen, Pepto-Bismol are challenging to find in Taiwan). Herbal supplements can also aid in staying healthy!
- Peppermint tea can be a little challenging to find here.
- Favorite recipes and some seasoning packets (Ranch dressing, gravy mix, taco seasoning, etc.)
- If you wear a women's size 8 shoe or larger, or men's size 10 or larger, then you will have a much harder time purchasing shoes in Taiwan, although it's not altogether impossible.
- Pictures of your home, family & friends (these can also be printed off at local photo shops in Taiwan)
- You will NOT need a voltage converter, since Taiwan uses 110v just like America. Most plug-ins are 2 prong, but 3-to-2 prong adaptors are very cheap and readily available. You may even find several sitting around your team station!

## Additional Ways to Prepare:

- Begin learning Mandarin Chinese! You can start building a foundation by learning Hanyu Pinyin and Zhuyin (Bopomofo). Don't get frustrated if it's not making sense – it will come together!
- “Chinese with Mike” on Youtube is helpful for beginners.
- A great Chinese dictionary app is Pleco. (When setting up Pleco or any other Chinese English dictionary app, make sure to select traditional characters as this is the writing system used in Taiwan.)
- Check out some travel books or websites; Lonely Planet ([lonelyplanet.com](http://lonelyplanet.com)) has quality resources. These will help to give you a better understanding of the country, culture, people, and religions that you'll be working among. Travel guides also have great ideas of places to visit!

# Taiwan VOICE Missions Commitment 2018 - 2019

The Taiwan VOICE Missions Program is an extremely unique opportunity to represent Christ under the watchful eye of many different organizations. Because there is so much riding on this life-changing experience, it is required of you to live and act responsibly on a daily basis. Please take the time to read the following commitments carefully.

## 1. **Be Courteous**

- I will respect the property, privacy, and rights of others, and will be resourceful with everything that is entrusted to me.
- I will keep myself, my belongings, and my room neat and orderly.
- I will show respect to my teammates and the Taiwanese people.
- I will not engage in offensive language or behavior.
- I will actively work to resolve conflicts on my team.
- I will build-up and encourage my team-mates, and will respect their privacy by not gossiping or spreading unkind rumors about them.

## 2. **Be Professional**

- I will dress suitably for each occasion and will follow the guidelines set forth in the Taiwan SOP Manual.
- I will act professionally in my all my classes by, preparing well, arriving on time, and proactively working with my co-teachers and students.

## 3. **Be Focused**

- I will avoid any entertainment that distracts me from serving the Lord and others.
- I will use my free time wisely.
- I will find a local church and attend when possible. (A minimum of two weeks per month is required).
- I will not seek or pursue a romantic relationship while serving as a Taiwan VOICE Missions Teacher.
- I will purpose to invest in the people around me, whether they are teammates, Taiwanese teachers, students, or those in my community.
- I will not receive monetary reimbursement apart from my stipend.

## 4. **Be Safe and Healthy**

- I will not drive a moped or motorcycle, and will only ride mopeds driven by other HTC coworkers on official outings.
- I will wear a helmet while riding a bicycle.
- I will be a wise steward of the body that God has given me and use caution in everyday activities and travel.
- I will refrain from partaking of alcoholic substances and from smoking.

I have read and agree to abide by all of the above commitments. I will follow the established guidelines, and will submit to the authority of VOICE Missions, my sponsoring organization, the Taiwanese government, and my team leader. I also understand that God is not limited by these guidelines and that appropriate appeals are encouraged in specific situations. I understand that I will be warned if I do not abide by the conditions of this commitment and that if I continue, I may be required to leave without compensation and reimburse my sponsor for the original cost of my plane ticket.