

Manual for a Short-term Mission

INTRODUCTION

We are living in a time of unprecedented opportunity for world evangelism. Concurrently, the resources to seize the opportunity are unlimited. What is needed in the church today is a mobilization of God's people towards the great challenge of taking the gospel to every creature. A willingness and resolve to meet this challenge is what the Holy Spirit is imparting to the church of Jesus Christ.

A careful student of recent church history can easily observe the evolution of the church missions movement in the last several decades. The world as we know it has gone through some rapid and dramatic changes in the last half century, and the process continues. New countries have been formed; boundaries have been redefined; the old order of governments have been scrapped in exchange for rule that will accommodate prosperity and prestige. The demise of Colonialism has given way to adamant Nationalism and nationalistic pride. Centralistic and Communist governments are being replaced by Democracies and independent attitudes. All these changes have been, and are presently, effecting the missions movement and methods of the church.

These changes have brought forth both good and bad. The strongholds of religious intolerance in the former communist regimes have succumbed to some of the greatest revivals that the world has known. Christian workers are pouring into these places and are experiencing great favor and liberty. On the other hand, nations that have lived under colonial oppression and control are rejecting many of the doctrines of that system, making it difficult for resident missionaries to remain in the rising tide of nationalism.

The state of the world has placed a demand on a certain kind of Christian worker. First, the **enormity** of the number of people to reach and new doors opening require large numbers of laborers to reap and keep this harvest. Great numbers of believers with all diversity of skills are needed. Second, the **urgency** of the hour we live in requires that we waste no time, and do the work of God quickly. People in our churches are better prepared than we often realize. They need an avenue to give what they have received.

In more recent times the movement towards short-term missions has been astounding. The numbers of ministers and "ordinary believers" that are joining the ranks of short-termers is dramatic. The resident, career missionary has not altogether become obsolete. Nevertheless, they are seen in fewer numbers, being replaced by itinerant, temporary workers. The contemporary strategy in missions is to promote the indigenous church by equipping nationals to "do the work of the ministry."

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This manual has been prepared in view of the expanding interest in short-term missions. It is not always possible to touch on every aspect of the mission experience during the times of preparation. Hopefully these pages will prepare the short-term missions candidate for a rewarding experience whether you are a full-time minister or a lay person.

This is by no means an exhaustive resource on the subject. There are many other informative sources that can be researched. Let this information be a starting place and a guide in preparing and enjoying your mission adventure.

WHAT IS A SHORT-TERM MISSION?

A short-term mission is a trip that provides a cross cultural experience, which can last from a week to a year. The mission is to demonstrate and promote the Christian faith through the various means available.

KINDS OF TEAMS

There are different kinds of short-term mission teams depending on what the purpose of the trip will be.

- ***a work team*** - will primarily be focused on construction of buildings, laboring on land projects, or other specialized task. (A trip incorporating medical skills may also fit under this category; although this work is certainly considered ministry, it is not strictly spiritual).
- ***a ministry team*** - all service for God can be considered ministry. However this type of team will be given a work that is primarily spiritual in nature, (i.e. preaching, teaching, evangelism and follow-up, counseling, etc.)
- ***an apostolic team*** - this group is comprised primarily of those who function as an apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, teacher. Their task will differ from other teams due to their spiritual qualifications and purpose.

Of course the size of any given team will vary according to the assignment, availability of persons, and the capacity to manage the group size. (As a guide, an individual leader can adequately manage 10-12 people.)

This manual is written with the assumption that you or your church has already investigated the opportunities for a short-term mission trip and have determined your destination. Hopefully you have considered the need, what skills are needed to meet the need, the cost and time limitations.

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Every church will have their own requirements for participation in a short-term mission trip. Considerations during the selection process should include age, health, spiritual maturity, previous mission experience, church faithfulness, ministry skills, relational skills and emotional stability.

THE BLESSINGS AND BENEFITS

It has been said that when God is involved in a work, and His will is being accomplished, EVERYONE WINS!

If God is leading you on a mission adventure you can be certain that He plans for everyone to benefit. Your trip should produce a mutual blessing for all that are involved. It is probable that you will return home with a positive, life changing experience; but if your visit was a burden to your host, then God's best was not accomplished. In walking through the steps of preparation, consider how your trip will benefit others as well as yourself.

Each individual involved in a short-term mission may benefit differently depending on their unique needs, desires and God's purpose for their lives. Here are some of the outstanding personal blessings available through a short-term trip:

- Increase your world vision and love for people.
- Enhance your understanding of, and identification with, another people group.
- Create opportunities to use the gifts and talents entrusted to you by serving others.
- Expose you to the possibility of future full-time missions work and give you valuable experience.
- Form closer relationships with team members you travel with, missionaries you will assist and new people that you meet.
- Develop character through the many new and sometimes unpredictable situations that you will encounter.
- Give you a greater appreciation for the blessing of God at home.
- Inspire spiritual growth and a closer walk with the Lord.

When an individual or team is sent from a local church, the repercussions can effect the entire congregation before and after the trip. Here are some of the most obvious advantages to the local church:

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- A uniting of many hearts for a single purpose - sending and supporting an individual or mission team.
- Increased awareness and world vision of those who stay as well as those who go.
- The blessings that are produced by giving prayer and financial support to the ones that are sent.
- A closer relationship between the church and the host missionary or national.
- A renewed commitment and appreciation for the church in the heart of the individual or team members that return.
- A sure cure for apathy, complacency and lethargy in the church through missions involvement.

The impact of an individual or team coming to work together with a host missionary or national cannot be overstated. A timely visit, an encouraging word, or a helping hand may carry a missionary through many difficult times. Here are some ways that a host will benefit from receiving a short term visitation.

- Forming new relationships and strengthening existing ones.
- The encouragement and refreshing they derive from fellowship with other believers.
- The exposure of their ministry and potential for partners that are joined with them in fulfilling the vision.
- The help, relief and boost that is given to the work through the various gifts that come.
- The possibility of additional labors to return on a more permanent basis.

PURPOSE

The first question to ask yourself in preparation for a mission trip is, WHY do I want to go to the mission field? Asking WHY will reveal your purpose and motive. Everything begins with purpose. IF purpose is not known or is not right, frustration, disappointment, chaos and failure are usually the result. When you are certain of your purpose you will know when it is accomplished. Once you understand your purpose, you can proceed with a plan.

There are many good reasons for wanting to "GO into all the world", but it is important to go for the **right reasons**. Consider the following before you decide

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to go:

Unacceptable reasons

1. Seeking an experience. Few people go to the mission field without returning with numerous and varied experiences. However, the reason to go is not to collect "war stories".

2. Running from something. Going on a mission trip will not solve your personal problems. Although God can speak to you anywhere - a mission adventure is not an escape from fears and failure at home. Don't go if you are battling emotional, physical or spiritual debilitating problems.

3. Establish your ministry. If you are unfaithful and ineffective for God at home, going to another country is not a promotion into a ministry that you didn't have before you left. There should be no pressure or aspirations to become something that you are not when you cross boundaries. Don't expect to step into a new ministry just because you are in a different place.

4. Personal satisfaction or significance. Any selfish reason for going is unacceptable. If your chief intention is to add to the list of places you've been, find a mate, peer pressure, gain acceptance from others or just go for the fun and excitement of travel, you need to reexamine and adjust your priorities.

Acceptable reasons

1. Love *"God so loved... He gave."* This simple, yet profound truth reveals the motive behind God's actions. He is a loving, merciful and compassionate Father, and for this reason He is compelled to reach out. Likewise, He gave us a commandment to *"Love our neighbor"* before He gave us a commission to reach our neighbor, knowing that His love in us would constrain us to go into all the world. The love of God is your most identifiable and irresistible virtue. It will be recognized universally.

2. Learn and be changed. Learning will change you. You'll learn more about God, yourself and others on a mission trip. If you don't have a desire to learn, stay home! Going to where you have not been should be one continual learning experience. Even if you've been before, there is always something to discover that you did not previously know. The more you learn about people, their customs and manners, and the places they live - the more effective you will be to meet their needs.

A teachable spirit is absolutely essential to having a fulfilling mission experience. Let it be evident to all that you desire to learn as much as you can.

3. Help. No one mortal can be everything to everybody. Because of the

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multitude of limitations you are faced with in another culture, it is presumption to think that you can do all, and be all, to all. You are a member in particular with a measure of the truth and power of God. When your measure is added to others, it causes progress in building God's kingdom.

Be satisfied to do your part. *"One plants, another waters, but God gives the increase."* When you go abroad, you are most likely building on another man's work who has preceded you - and you want to build wisely, considering the one who comes after you. No matter what office you stand in, you are helping to build with others. Use the abilities God has given to serve the host missionary and the people.

EXPECTATIONS

Everyone will enter into the initial stages of preparation with preconceived ideas about virtually everything. This is why you need to get as many of the facts as possible before you go. Accurate knowledge will help to eliminate any unrealistic expectations, misconceptions, and prejudices that you may have. It is not uncommon to hear, "it's not what I thought it would be." or "I expected something different" from those who have had unrealistic expectation. Many disappointments and frustrations on the field have been the result of unfulfilled expectations. The people who make too many assumptions without acquiring the proper knowledge of facts often end up dissatisfied. A cardinal rule for travelers is **ASSUME NOTHING**. Do your best to research each aspect of your trip as thoroughly as possible. Ask questions, no matter how foolish or unimportant they seem. Don't allow yourself to set goals or hold expectations, particularly in the area of ministry, based on presumption.

EXAMPLE: A disillusioned person may be one who hopes to see hundreds saved and a church to be raised in the course of a one or two week trip. Only time can produce certain results and a short-team missionary with these expectations probably will not witness all they hope for on one trip. Another person may expect to stay busy from morning to night preaching and teaching. Is this a real possibility or a fantasy? It's best to find out before you go.

Not every missionary witnesses a warm reception or hunger for the Word of God among the natives. The fact is that there are many places that are very hardened to the gospel and the response or lack of interest should not devastate you.

Don't let what others may or may not do rob you of the fulfillment which God intended you to have by going on the trip. Remember that God alone can make your trip worthwhile and fulfilling. Establish that it is God that opened the door for you and that he will fulfill your expectations.

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What can you expect?

- You can expect that God will open opportunities for you to be a blessing that are not beyond your ability to handle or others' capabilities to receive.
- You can expect the supernatural ministry of the Holy Spirit, but remember that the supernatural is not always spectacular.
- You can expect ministry that will produce results as you do the right things. Doing good things will keep you busy, but doing the right things will produce results.
- You can expect to learn many new things about people and places as you maintain a teachable spirit.
- You can expect to be changed - to be a better person, a more effective minister - as you are willing to be changed.

MISCONCEPTIONS

There are many misconceptions and prejudices about North Americans and the U.S. that people have formed through a variety of ways. You are most likely the victim of tales or experiences that have preceded you, whether true or untrue. Therefore, you may have a reputation to live down or up to. Don't be intimidated. Just understand that people are given to stereotyping and labeling. You can help their perceptions of Americans by your conduct.

Here are three of the most predominant views about U.S. citizens.

• *The Ugly American*

The stereotype envisions Americans as aggressive, brash, loud and obnoxious. This idea of dominating and condescending can be overcome by serving with a humble heart.

• *The Rich American*

This portrayal views Americans as wealthy and materialistic. Many in Third World countries think that every American is rich and that our lifestyles are affluent, comfortable and easy.

• *The Immoral American*

Some strongly religious cultures perceive Americans, and The West in general, as immoral, corrupt and decadent. They cannot equate our profession as a Christian nation with the violence and evil that is reflected through the media.

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When it comes to stereotyping, we Americans are as guilty as any other people. We have formed our own opinions of foreigners based on what we have been told or seen. (Uneducated, slow, poor, lazy, inefficient). This is equally wrong and, as part of the preparation for your trip, you need to examine your perceptions carefully and adjust your thinking.

ATTITUDE

Attitude has to do with the way we think. How we interpret events, how we perceive people and places, how we conduct ourselves is determined by our attitude. Our attitudes are formed by a lifetime of knowledge and experience we have acquired; both good and bad, positive and negative.

We all know people who for various reasons have a miserable attitude. It manifests in nearly everything they say or do. These folks can't seem to enjoy new experiences or relationships, and usually don't like to see others enjoy them either. If your perspective towards life is basically negative and you can't seem to change - get some help. A short-term mission trip is probably not for you at this time. A missions experience won't change a bad attitude, only magnify it.

Some attitude adjustments are relatively minor and can easily be made by receiving truth and being willing to change. Evaluate your attitude as part of the preparation for the mission trip. Be willing to change and take the steps necessary to correct your thinking. Part of adjusting your attitude is ridding yourself of any misconceptions, prejudices or wrong ideas you have about where you are going - the culture and the people. The remedy is to maintain a teachable spirit and get the facts.

An individual with a healthy attitude towards people, circumstances, etc. is taking along perhaps the most important ingredient for making a mission experience a success.

Philippians 2:5 *"Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus."*

:7 *"....taking the form of a bond servant,"*

:8 *"....He humbled Himself by becoming obedient"*

Allow Jesus' attitude to be your example. This scripture reveals that He took an attitude of a servant. Not a superior or a superstar, but a bond slave. No attitude is more discernible by others than haughty, proud, "I'm better than you are" thinking. This viewpoint will close doors of ministry faster than anything. Even the most unintelligent people can easily perceive motives. Think as a servant. Act like a servant as you seek to help people.

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Philippians 2 also tells us that Jesus humbled himself. He made a decision to come among the people he desired to help as a slave: to serve and to give his life. He chose with the full knowledge of who he was, where He came from, and where He was returning. Being a citizen of one country makes us no better than any one else. In fact, our blessings should humble us to our responsibility to share with others.

"Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself." vr.3

Flexibility

Flexibility can be described as the willingness and ability to adapt to new and different conditions. This is an attitude that every person traveling cross-culturally must bring along. Invariably each trip you take overseas will be accompanied by the unexpected. No matter how thorough your planning and preparation, there are some things that you cannot prepare for prior to leaving. You should establish this fact in your thinking so that you will respond to these changes positively rather than react negatively. Accepting the minor and major changes that are sure to happen will greatly determine how fulfilling your ministry and mission experience will be.

A good missionary could be described as having the characteristics of an old shoe. Its sole is tough to endure the constant pounding on the path of life. That same leather sole is also flexible to bend, but not break, while walking over the little obstacles along the way.

Depending on the type of short-term trip you are on, you may find yourself with a lot of FREE-TIME. It is likely that you will not have the diversions to fill your free-time like you find at home, so expect and prepare to use it constructively. Be careful to adhere to any guidelines that have been established by the leadership, or dictated by culture, as you utilize your free-time.

WAITING is also an inseparable part of travel and a cross-cultural experience. Most cultures do not operate at the pace and precision that you are used to at home. If you do not anticipate a waiting experience, you are likely to be frustrated. Resolve in yourself that you can not always control the circumstances that you encounter, and that you will not be anxious during those times. Plan for some creative ways to pass the time.

AUTHORITY AND RELATIONSHIPS

Whether you are traveling with a group of three or thirty, one individual should

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be recognized as the leader in order to effect an efficient and orderly mission experience. This rule of one head is essential from beginning to end.

The leader may be selected from a group of people that are similarly qualified. At times a person's qualifications will make him the obvious choice for the position.

Qualifications of a team leader

- A spiritually mature individual to whom the duties of leadership are not foreign. Not a novice, but one that is proved, respected and meeting the scriptural criterion for such a position.
- A person of adequate knowledge and experience in international travel and different cultures.
- One who has demonstrated commitment and experience in church ministry.
- The ability to relate well with people and direct a group without being domineering or himself being intimidated.
- Help team members interpret and process what they experience. (One may not be able to interpret the language but can interpret and help process what people are seeing and hearing through experience).

Responsibility of the team leader

Once a team leader has been designated and delegated authority, this individual should be involved in every aspect of the short-term trip. His input during the screening and selection of team members will be necessary and valuable. Competent leadership begins at home during the preparatory stages and is carried through until the debriefing period. Here is an overview of the duties assumed by the group leader:

- Make initial and subsequent contact with missionary host or national. The leader will maintain the role of liaison between the host and team during the entire trip. Let the team know that you are under the authority of the host. You should be familiar with the particular ministry of the host and work within the vision and goals that are established.
- Arrange for all logistical and itinerant details.
- Coordinate with the host all scheduling for ministry engagements (work) during the trip.
- Promote a team spirit, unity and cohesiveness by healthy interaction and discussion.
- Communicate with team members all details relating to preparation and

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participation on the trip.

- See that all the practical requirements are met by each person.
- Be aware of the unique needs of each team member.
- Take the lead and oversight during the times of group devotion and prayer.
- Confront interpersonal problems and difficult situations that arise before and during the trip.
- Give or get the answer to all questions that arise.
- Debrief the team upon returning home.

In order to prepare adequately for your trip, the group should meet initially 4 to 6 months in advance, then with more frequency and focus in the last 2 months.

Each preparatory meeting is an opportunity to not only communicate facts, but to build an interdependence among the group and a team spirit. The team leader should plan activities that promote openness, mutual appreciation and dependance among the group.

Attendance at all preparatory meetings prior to departure should be obligatory, with attention given to all information that is communicated during these times. Questions should be encouraged no matter how foolish or trivial they may seem.

Remember it is not the responsibility of a group leader to see that your mission experience is fulfilling and rewarding. Carrying out the duties of leadership will help to facilitate a successful trip, but it is God Who must be your source of satisfaction and fulfillment.

Relating to leadership

It is extremely important that the principles of authority and submission are understood. Adherence to these principles will determine whether the trip is a success or a disaster.

Submission starts with an individual's response to Christ as Lord. Jesus is the Supreme authority in the church and should be in a believers life. Obedience is the only acceptable response to His Lordship. The authority of Christ is carried down through the delegated leaders He has set in the church. Your pastor, team leader, and foreign host all represent authority because of the responsibility entrusted to them. Here are some guidelines in relating to authority.

- **Recognize that God has set authority in your lives. Your team leader, pastor and host are a delegated extension of God's authority. This authority is ordained**

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to keep us moving toward fulfilling His purpose in an orderly way.

- **Receive** God's delegated authority as you would the Lord Himself. Submit yourself to God's representatives so that you will partake of the blessings of obedience.
- **Respect** those in leadership. Don't allow familiarity to taint your attitude and actions towards the one in charge. Esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake.
- **Respond** to the authority by obeying promptly, from the heart, his directives. Often times instant and exact compliance to a command from leadership is absolutely vital in situations that occur during travel and on the field. Do everything without murmuring, complaining or criticizing.

Relating to your host

When traveling on a short-term mission you will almost always be working through a contact person; a liaison between you and the people and culture you are visiting. This person may be a resident missionary from your country or a national minister or worker. They will be your host for at least a part of your trip.

It is appropriate to assume that your host is more knowledgeable than you of what is culturally acceptable and unacceptable. He is more familiar with the cultural differences that exist and how to cope with those differences. He will also have a better understanding of the spiritual climate of the nation and the people's level of Christian growth. Your host knows *what* needs to be done and *how* to get things done. For these reasons and more, your host will be a great asset towards making your ministry productive and lasting. It is imperative that you submit to your host as a more knowledgeable and experienced minister on the field.

Keep in mind that you are to serve your host in every possible way, relieving him of the practical and spiritual work of ministry, and being an encouragement at the same time. Be conscious of working together with your host, flowing with the thrust of his particular ministry and doing everything you can to enhance his vision. In the practical areas you can take the initiative to help without being asked.

In most cases your host will be a resident of the nation which you are temporarily visiting. He has won the favor and respect of the nationals through time and contact. Always remember that all ministry and behavior reflects back

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on the host. Valuable relationships and trust that have been built by your host can be damaged or erased by the ignorance and irresponsibility of a visiting minister or team member.

As a general rule, make **no** commitments, **no** promises, **no** guarantees to nationals without your host knowing **first**. If you feel that the Lord is speaking to you about giving money or other items to the natives, speak with your host **first**. He will be able to instruct you in the best way to obey what is in your heart and the proper way to distribute your gift. Many sincere attempts to bless nationals have been counterproductive because certain procedures and etiquette were not known or observed. Coordinate any future contact or involvement with nationals through the host or contact person as a matter of simple ethical conduct. It is not a good practice to give out your personal address or phone number to those with whom you are not well acquainted.

As you minister to nationals, any situation that requires personal counsel should be reserved for your host. Also, any personal ministry that takes place should be communicated to the host, which will enable him to follow up properly after you leave.

The ministry that you have into the life of your host may be the most valuable part of the entire trip. In many instances these people have sacrificed greatly to remain on the mission field. They have carried the burden of ministry and leadership. They have faced trials and temptations that are unfamiliar to most Americans. Make sufficient time to be with your host. Be sensitive to the opportunity that you have to encourage, edify and listen to them. Often the seemingly insignificant considerations and gestures that you make towards your host are invaluable. There is much to learn from exposure to the life of a missionary as well as his work. Allow their work to impact your life, and be sensitive to your future participation in the vision after you have left.

Team relations

If you are traveling with a team of any size, there will be many opportunities for learning, growing and working together. How the team relates to one another can make the mission trip a blessing or a curse. Your best chance of having a profitable and rewarding trip is to be prepared to live and work in close contact with others.

A team represents a unique collection of varied life experiences, personalities, backgrounds, ages, gender and divine grace. For a team to work productively, each member must submit personal feelings, ambitions and prominence to the efficiency of the whole.

Any team experience will probably feature a close, communal like environment

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- something that we are unaccustomed to in the U.S. From the point of embarkment until you return home, you are going to be traveling, eating, sleeping in close contact with people that you may not know very well. This experience itself will prove to be a culture shock.

You may not be used to this level of intimacy with others, but allow the opportunity to produce godly character in your life. Endeavor to understand the people God has placed you with. **Diversity** in the Body of Christ is a blessing because it is God's idea. Differences in personality and the diversity of the grace of God in people's lives make a team more potent and increase the potential of your ministry together.

Be ready to learn some important lessons from your team experience.

For example:

- Accept people for who they are. This will mean looking past their faults and weaknesses.
- Recognize the strengths of your team mates and allow those strengths to make up for the lack in others.
- Practice long-suffering and forgiveness.
- Prepare to give up your own rights for the good of the team.
- Guard against sin: being careful not to offend or take offense, and cautious of unhealthy and unwise interaction with the members of the opposite sex. Walk in love, don't fall in love.

Let the scriptural pattern for relating be the guide:

"...be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another."

"...through love serve one another."

"...be submissive to one another."

"...in honor give preference to one another."

"...have the same care for one another."

Another of the important lessons that will be learned by the team experience is the **interdependence** that there is in the Body of Christ. *"The eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee."* A short-term team should recognize that they are most effective when every member in particular is adding their part to the work. Teamwork...

The leader will be responsible for the pairing of team members (for living accommodations, ministry activities, etc.) It is wise to join experience with inexperience, and also consider things as personality, age, gender and marital status.

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Each team member is expected to take part in all group activities. No one should be permitted to isolate themselves or retire into seclusion. The team leader should know when an individual is going to leave the group for any length of time.

As they travel, team members should be sensitive to the spiritual and emotional needs of one another. There will most likely be several "first-timers" along on the trip: first time travelers, first time out of the country, first time away from the family, wife, children, etc. These first time experiences can affect an individual emotionally in ways that they did not anticipate. In these areas the group can be a mutual support to one another.

Team members should be instructed to deal with interpersonal conflicts and confrontation in a scriptural and godly fashion; without allowing offense, bitterness or unforgiveness to take a hold in anyone's life. In a more serious conflict, the team leader should be asked to help resolve the matter.

It is recommended that team devotions be conducted each day of the missions trip. During this time a team member can share a reading, a meditation, and exhortation from the scripture. This can also be a time of praise, prayer and testimony. The group devotion should also encourage open and honest communication amongst the group about their experiences and any personal prayer needs they may have. The group leader may take this opportunity to communicate the daily schedule of activities and instructions.

Each member should also be encouraged to keep a daily journal of their short-term experience; recording events, personal impressions and God's dealing in their lives. This will certainly be a memoir that will be treasured in the future and perhaps shared with others.

In those instances when a seasoned minister is traveling as a member of a team, (not the leader), it is expected that they will submit themselves to authority in the same manner that would be expected of any in the group. Their position in the Body of Christ does not afford them any special privilege if they are part of a team.

Relating to culture

This manual will not provide an exhaustive study on the subject of culture, which would necessitate volumes. However, it is important to have an elementary understanding of the subject for the simple reason that a short-term worker will touch a different culture and will need a guide on how to relate to this new environment.

The anatomy of culture consists of values, beliefs, attitudes and patterns of

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behavior characteristic of any specific people group. These basic elements, linked together, are what give people a sense of identity.

In our world, and even in a given society, you can observe a myriad of variations in cultural beliefs, values, attitudes and behavior. Each of these areas can be broken down further, for example: words, gestures, symbols and their meanings are an extension of very different belief systems. (A study of culture is very complex).

When preparing to enter another culture the first role is to become a student. Learn to look at things from the viewpoint of the natives. The world view of a typical North American is ethnocentric (we judge people and patterns of behavior by the unique characteristics of our own culture). Hopefully you can see that a cultural bias can be a hindrance, potentially harmful, to a successful short-term mission.

God has ordained diversity, and He enjoys it as well. This fact is evidenced in all creation. Therefore, different cultural expressions are not inherently right or wrong. Every culture has been tainted by sin, but we make a mistake thinking that different is bad or sinful.

You want to avoid making judgments on everything you experience. Most things you will encounter are neither good nor bad, right nor wrong -just different. However different the beliefs, values, attitudes and behavior of the people, you must assume that it all makes perfect sense to them.

There is an authority that is represented in culture. It is necessary to respect and submit to that cultural authority as long as there is no clear violation of a higher authority - God's Word or your conscience.

Each culture defines certain behavior as sinful. The variations of right and wrong change as you move from one culture to another. It becomes important to identify and distinguish any specific behavior as a violation of the moral principles of the scripture that are absolute or your own cultural code of ethics. Certain conduct which is acceptable, even among Christians, in one culture, would not be tolerated in another.

There are instances when you, as a guest in another country, must tolerate the beliefs and subsequent actions of the natives without reacting in judgment and condemnation. Remember you are a guest, and your openness to the new and different experiences will determine how well you are received and how helpful you will be. On occasions when you are confronted with an unscriptural cultural position - stand for the Word. When necessary, approach any error or contradiction with truth, love, mercy and on the strength of relationship.

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Those who seek to help people, and even introduce change, must be able to present the Gospel in a manner that impacts lives without threatening the positive elements of culture. In other words, proclaim and demonstrate the uncompromised Word of God and expect that lives will be changed from the inside out. But don't try to effect the way people live by attempting to change their culture. The process of transformation will eventually affect decisions about their own cultural beliefs and values.

There is frequently a sense of guilt that a North American deals with when traveling to a Third World nation. This kind of guilt is unjustifiable. It is the product of being from a prosperous nation, experiencing the poverty in another country. In order to cope with these feelings, it is important to realize that culture is, at times, mistaken for poverty. For example, a very wealthy man or woman may walk through the streets of India barefoot because it is culturally accepted and personally preferred. Or a host may serve dog meat to an honored guest because it is considered a delicacy. But to an American mind these may be interpreted as signs of poverty.

Interpret the needs of the people in the context of their own cultural environment and not in light of your own cultural standards. Perhaps your perception of the kind of ministry that is worthwhile and productive may not be accurate. Be sure that your attempts to reach out and help "deprived" people does not proceed from an unhealthy guilt complex, but rather a genuine compassion and obedience to God. Doing good things to assist people with less material possessions can sometimes produce resentment in those that you seek to help. Even in the most desperate circumstances, having little or nothing in material wealth, most people will still maintain their self respect. So every effort to minister to their needs should allow them to preserve personal dignity. In seeking to be a blessing on a short-term mission you will need to have a basic understanding of the delicate areas of culture which, when violated, may cause insult. For example, one might inadvertently offend by gesturing in an improper manner or, by merely spitting, you may be breaking the law.

Unknowingly, foreigners can offend as easily through omission (things they don't do) as by acts of commission (what they do). Something as simple as neglecting to remove your shoes at the doorway of a home can be looked upon as impolite, when you had not even considered it. By failing to give a proper greeting, you may have insulted you host without knowing. For this reason, you want to research and learn as much as you can about social taboos before traveling.

The Word of God has much to say about respecting the conscience of others and being careful not to be an offense in our actions. The book of Romans the

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14 chapter offers some helpful advice on how to avoid conflict and potentially offensive areas.

Vr.1 Don't dispute your convictions, opinions or beliefs that have no bearing on spiritual matters of significance. Seek those areas that are non-controversial, which can be agreed upon and will edify.

Vr.3 Don't despise or show contempt for manners and customs that are different than your own. Criticizing and constantly comparing your culture with others will create breaches rather than build bridges.

Vr.20 Don't destroy a relationship or an opportunity to do good by using your liberty in Christ when you know it will offend. Your rights are not as important as the impression you are leaving behind.

Here are some common areas which people can easily offend in another culture.

• *Humor*

Used properly, humor can be a wonderfully constructive tool in communication. However, it can also cause great damage when used inappropriately. Every person's sense of humor is not the same, and culture can powerfully dictate what is considered "funny" or offensive. For example, a casual remark about gender or ethnic origin that would commonly draw a laugh back home may cause hurt and deep resentment when shared in the wrong company.

Be very careful and sensitive with how you employ humor in a strange environment. It is best to refrain from foolish jesting, teasing or silliness which can easily be misunderstood.

Under no circumstances should you poke fun at different cultural expressions. Don't draw unnecessary attention to yourself with loud and boisterous behavior.

• *Food*

It has been aptly said, "Don't ever pray, 'Where you lead me, I will follow,' unless you can say with the next breath, 'What they feed me, I will swallow.'"

Diet is one of the more identifying marks of cultural diversity. People are proud of their native dishes and in most places it is considered rude to refuse to eat what is prepared for you. Many times it is with great sacrifice that a meal is served, and the food is usually the best that is available.

We often associate an aversion and unwillingness to savor new kinds of food

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with children. They usually pass judgment before it ever gets to their mouth. "Something that looks so bad cannot possibly taste good." Such an attitude is childish, but too often it resembles adult encounters with different foods.

Make every effort to sample the native foods. By doing so, you demonstrate your willingness to identify and an unselfish attitude. Don't be so insolent as to turn away what is served with a lame excuse (I'm fasting, thank you.). Don't complain about what you eat.

• *Dress*

Clothing is another identifying cultural trait easily observed. Often foreigners are easily marked by their unique fashion.

Consider the kind of clothing that is represented in the country where you are heading, then choose and pack a wardrobe that is simple, conservative, reflecting the class and culture of the people you will be with. It is not wise to be gaudy and conspicuous in your attire. You must be careful about wearing elaborate jewelry if there is a possibility it may offend.

In some places a person who represents God is expected to dress in a modest manner. When these beliefs are not respected, it will definitely reflect on your attempts to minister and serve in the Name of God.

So, in preparation for your short-term mission, gather as much information about the country, culture and people as possible. This knowledge and understanding will help alleviate what is commonly referred to as "culture shock" and equip you to be a greater blessing.

BONDING

Bonding is not a Bible word but it is a Biblical principle. We can see the scriptural precedent in the incarnation, "*The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.*" Jesus, Who left heaven, where He belonged, became a believer with humankind in order to draw people into a belonging relationship with God.*(see resources)

Today, the concept of bonding is seen and understood best, perhaps, in the relationship between a mother and a child immediately after childbirth. In this context, here is what author E. Thomas Brewster has to say; "Apparently, just after birth, divinely-designed psychological and physiological factors in the newborn uniquely prepare him to become bonded with his parents. The senses of the infant are being stimulated by a multitude of new sensations. The birth is essentially an entrance into a *new culture* with new sights, new sounds, new

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smells, new positions, new environment and new ways of being held. Yet, at that particular time, he is equipped with an extraordinary ability to respond to these unusual circumstances."

The parallels between the infant's entrance into a new culture and an adult's mission experience are amazingly similar: new sights, new sounds, new smells. During the initial introduction into a new culture and environment, a person is in a place of unique readiness to respond to the people and circumstances around him. With the proper preparation and encouragement the typical culture shock syndrome can be tempered by a rewarding experience of bonding.

To gain the most fulfillment from a short-term missions experience, a person should be encouraged to immerse themselves into the culture as much as possible, as soon as possible. At the time of arrival, the traveler is typically most alert (excepting some possible jet lag) and full of interest in his new surroundings. Within the boundaries of decency and common sense, a person should be permitted to satisfy that curiosity and assimilate as much as he can without being protected from what is different.

A failure to allow oneself to properly bond with the people and environment accounts for the "bad" experiences people have on the mission field. When the process of bonding does not take place, rejection of the people, or even abuse can occur - it is often reflected in the attitude behind statements like "Oh, these people! Why do they always do things this way?" or "Somebody ought to teach them how to live!" or "Won't these people *ever* learn?"

We have another word in our language that essentially carries the same message as bonding. That word is IDENTIFICATION. Much of the time there is a need to identify before effective ministry can take place. In the process of bonding with people and forming relationships, there is an identification that is taking place. You will receive not just knowledge, but understanding about people; why they are the way they are, why they act the way they act. Understanding is beginning to identify. When you can take this new found understanding of the people you are among to the pulpit, and use it to help communicate God's word to their needs, you are going to be effective.

The cross cultural experience of a short-term missionary will be brief, and for this reason it is unrealistic to expect one to become completely functional in a new environment. Regardless, people should be encouraged to become immersed in the culture. Going, seeing, hearing, doing are the best ways to identify with the needs of the world. The reason person after person has come home from the mission field changed is because they can identify with people and places that they had only heard about before. With identification comes commitment.

COMMUNICATING CROSS-CULTURALLY

Communication, in its essence, is making a connection between two separate parts. This process is the most challenging aspect of our commission to take the gospel to all the world. Because the world is made up of so many different parts - cultures, languages, beliefs - we must work at overcoming the obstacles that hinder our communication with others. Making the connection is possible, but not always easy.

Cross-cultural communication is both verbal and non-verbal. Non-verbal communication has to do with your behavior. You don't have to say anything to communicate; what you are, the way you conduct yourself, your appearance and manners are sending a message all the time.

Verbal communication relates to your attempt to be understood through language. Unless you have linguistic training in the native tongue, you will need the assistance of a translator.

Perhaps the most integral truth about communication is that it requires the involvement of two persons to be successful. You can be talking - but if people are not listening (hearing) - then you are not communicating. And if people are not understanding, you are not communicating well. It is not enough to just be heard, you want to be understood as you communicate the gospel of Christ. You may think that you are communicating one message to your listener, but, because words are being processed through the filter of another culture, the message may be losing some of its meaning.

In any and every kind of cross-cultural experience that you encounter, you will be confronted with the obvious gap that exists. This gap is created by manners and customs and is often accentuated by a different language that is spoken in the culture you have entered. The gap places you at an immediate disadvantage. Your desire should be to close or bridge that gap as much as possible so that what you have to give can be received and applied to effect a godly change in people's lives.

One of the cardinal rules of effective teaching is to first discover what the pupil knows. Once you have determined what they know, then you can proceed to build upon that knowledge. Through this process you are relating new information to old information that is already learned, thereby making it easier for the pupil to receive and apply your teaching.

The same principle applies when communicating the Word of God cross-culturally. It is important to "locate" your audience, those you are ministering

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to, in order to impart a knowledge of God's Word that will be life changing. Some questions you should ask yourself are:

- What cultural assumptions have I made as a guest in this country? You should have gained a basic knowledge and understanding of the host culture.
- At what level are the people in their spiritual growth? You don't feed strong meat to babies.
- Are they literate? Many people, especially in Third World countries, are illiterate. That fact should change your approach in ministry.
- What are the accepted cultural beliefs and values that would conflict with the scriptural principles I desire to share? An example might be the role of women in society, which varies greatly from one country to another.
- What kind of thought processes in their culture might limit or hinder them from receiving the Word? One culture may be more intellectual, while another will relate more to illustration and stories.
- Do they have Bibles? If they don't have Bibles, there is no need to have them turn to scriptures. You cannot make assumptions in other cultures that you would make in the U.S.

Many ministers with good intentions are ineffective in verbal communication cross-culturally because they are more orientated towards their teaching and preaching than they are towards the ones they are speaking to. The result is very little accomplished in ministry.

An effective communicator will determine the level at which the student can comprehend truth and then minister on that level. You may need to share the "milk of the word" instead of the meat. The first principles of the doctrine of Christ, the foundational truths, will establish people in the faith. Much of what missions work involves is establishing.

If you desire to see lives affected positively during the course of your missions trip, then you must give attention and diligence to communicating well. This is especially true when you are attempting to communicate the Word of God to others.

WORKING WITH AN INTERPRETER

What is an interpreter?

An interpreter is a mouthpiece. He speaks what he hears another say. He speaks on behalf of another, as Aaron spoke on behalf of Moses.

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A simple definition of the word interpret is **to explain the meaning of something**. So, an interpreter is one who takes a thought, idea, or message and translates it into another language in words that may be understood by the hearers.

"Locating" your interpreter

The following questions should be considered as you prepare to work with an interpreter. The more knowledge you have of your partner, the better prepared and effective you will be.

- Is he a believer? mature Christian? minister? church leader?
- Is he experienced as an interpreter?
- Is your interpreter qualified and experienced to give altar calls? (i.e. salvation, baptism with the Holy Spirit) If yes, then it is wise to allow the interpreter the liberty to conduct altar calls. During this important part of the service - the less distractions the better, and often times, giving an altar call through an interpreter can be less effective than if they gave it themselves.

Guidelines for working with an interpreter

- Going into a situation where an interpreter will be used you must accept the reality that it will take twice as long to communicate a message that you would preach without translation. For this reason you must make the adjustments. Given the time restraints and the normal attention span of people you must prepare your message to be brief and simple. It is wise not to attempt to present too much material in one message.

Ideally it is good to have more than one service with the people to whom you are ministering. This allows you to more adequately develop a subject. However, the amount of services you have is not often in your control.

- Approach your assignment with a teachable spirit, ready to learn. You should always desire to improve your skills at working with an interpreter, so ask as many questions as you have concerning this task.
- It is best to use the interpreter that is appointed to you rather than choose or use your own. Your host will likely be the best person to know who is most qualified as an interpreter. Even if you bring your own interpreter who knows the language, he is still at a disadvantage because he does not know the people and may not speak the dialect.
- If at all possible, meet with your interpreter before the service...

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- to review the basic theme of the message and the main points;
 - to examine the scripture you will be using; (Bible translations in other languages will often express individual scriptures differently than your translation.)
 - to discuss any direction or impressions the Holy Spirit has given you concerning the service;
 - to pray, ask and answer any questions.
-
- Understand that given the circumstances you may be in, your interpreter may not be experienced or learned. It is your responsibility to put him at ease.
 - Understand that the interpreter is indispensable to you - without him you cannot bring the Word of the Lord to people. Your goal is to minister together as one man; having the same mind, spirit and anointing.
 - An interpreter does not need to translate verbatim - word for word. If an interpreter feels that he needs to translate verbatim, it can bring much added pressure and even quench the anointing of God. The interpreter should feel comfortable hearing the message and, in turn, expressing it as his own message.
 - If only one microphone is available for the message - the interpreter gets it. There is no need for the microphone to be shared.
 - Allow the people to become familiar with you before getting into your message.
 - Allow the interpreter to read the scripture you are using from his Bible. There is seldom any need for you to read it as well.
 - Avoid any controversial subjects.
 - Don't try to "preach it" just like at home. Realize you are in a special situation.
 - Do nothing to abuse or embarrass your interpreter. Do not use him as an example, object, illustration or puppet. It is difficult for an interpreter to translate in the proper tense if he is being used as the subject in a story.
 - Never express frustration, impatience, exasperation or a condescending

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attitude towards your interpreter either in words or in body language.

- Do not interrupt the interpreter. Don't begin your next thought or sentence until he is finished. Brief pauses will not hinder God's Spirit or the anointing. Remember - if people are not understanding, you are not communicating.
- Use half or whole sentences that carry a complete thought. Sentence structure of other languages is different and therefore makes it extremely difficult or impossible to begin an interpretation without a complete thought.
- Do not carry multiple thoughts while you are delivering your message. Explain completely and simply every thought you are making before moving on to the next.
- Do your best to ignore the interpreter as you are speaking. Avoid looking over at your interpreter after you have expressed a thought and he is interpreting. Do not concentrate on what the interpreter is saying - just wait for him to stop speaking.
- Avoid using cultural jokes, illustrations, comparisons, idiomatic or colloquial expressions. "American English" does not resemble any other language. You must assume that people to whom you are speaking are not familiar with culture within the United States.
- Use examples that people can identify with, (that are common to their culture, or common to all cultures).
- Avoid continuous reference to Greek and Hebrew words and their definitions.
- Avoid reading many scriptures in your message.
- Avoid using any "play on words", (i.e. rhymes, acronyms, etc.) in preparing or delivering your message. Words have a completely different sound, spelling and sometimes meaning when speaking cross culturally.
- Avoid asking questions of the interpreter as part of the message.
- When an interpreter asks you to repeat, there are two reasons: 1. he didn't

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hear; 2. he didn't understand. If it is the former, a simple repetition is sufficient. If it is the latter, you must either express your thought differently or use a synonym for the word that is questionable. It is the speaker's responsibility to make sure the interpreter understands.

- If you have asked for a verbal response from the people you are speaking to, allow the extra time for them to respond (and for you to have the response translated) before moving on in your message.
- Get feedback from your interpreter and/or church leader on how you can change and improve to be a more effective cross-cultural communicator. It is likely that they will have had experience with other guest speakers. Remember that working with an interpreter is an art that needs practice to get good at it. Don't be discouraged.

Remember the language of the heart is understood by all cultures. When your heart is sincere and your attitude is right, people will appreciate any attempt you make to communicate, even when an interpreter is not available.

FUND RAISING

Any short-term trip will have to be funded in one way or another. Unless you plan to use resources that have been accumulated through savings, you will need to look to other means.

To some the prospect of raising money to pay for a trip is anything but exciting, perhaps even dreaded or feared. But this need not be your attitude. Watching God provide through a variety of ways can be thrilling, not to mention what it will do to increase your faith. So it is to your advantage to enter into the arena of fund-raising with a positive attitude of anticipation.

For the individual that may be traveling with a group from another church or an independent mission organization, your pastor should first be consulted. Don't inform the pastor of your decision to go until you have first asked him for counsel as you are considering the opportunity. Be prepared to listen to and respect any suggestions he may have. You should desire to be sent out from under the authority of the local church, with the blessing of the pastor and participation of the people. Be sure to express this desire to your pastor and share the financial need. Allow him to suggest the possibility of the church's involvement and the proper channels to communicate with the church family. After you have settled in your heart that you are supposed to go, begin by recognizing God as your Source. He is the One that will ultimately provide what is needed. *"But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches*

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in glory by Christ Jesus." Ph.4:19 Have faith that He will come through and do His part as you do yours. ("Where God guides, He provides"). When you have determined exactly how much is needed for your trip, pray, believing that all provision will be supplied, and begin to thank God. "What things soever you desire, when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you shall have them." Mk.11:24

You need to also understand that God has ordained that His people support His work. The principle of partnership and accepting gifts from others is part of His plan for reaching the world with the Gospel. *"Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel."* If most people look to their own resources alone, they will not make the effort to go, and few will have actually reached the mission field. Don't determine your availability based on just your resources. Give God the opportunity to go beyond your means.

With the knowledge of how God's economy works, believe that He has prepared people that will be a part of funding your trip - partners. *"Arise, [Elijah] get thee to Zarephath...and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee."* 1 Kg.17:9 A partner is one that helps or shares in accomplishing a work. This concept is clearly scriptural and reinforces the interdependency within the Body of Christ. Fund-raising is locating those whom God has already chosen to take part in your mission. As you do your part to **inform** people, trust that God will **inspire** them to participate.

You are ready to take the next step and develop a fund-raising strategy. Begin by preparing a clear, concise and complete presentation of your trip to share with people (Who, What, Where, When, Why). Be sure to mention that you are part of a team if this is true. Include in your presentation an accurate description of your financial need (budget) which states the total cost and a breakdown of what the cost will cover. In addition you must be ready to tell people how they can contribute (checks payable to: are receipts available?), where to send their offering and when the money is needed. You should also provide a response vehicle such as a remittance envelope or pledge card, making it as easy as possible for them to give. Gain confidence in your presentation by practicing, and prepare for questions that may be asked.

Compose a letter that includes all the pertinent information that is in your presentation. However, you won't want to depend on correspondence alone to produce the financial response you need. Make personal contact with people. Face to face meetings are usually appreciated more than indirect contact regardless of how uncomfortable it may be. Studies that have rated methods of communication place one-to-one encounters as the most effective, followed by small group meetings, large group meetings, telephone calls, handwritten

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letters, typed correspondence and form letters.

Make your appeals as personal as possible. It is important that your partners feel closely associated and identified with your mission. This is accomplished through good, personal communication before, during and after the trip. Take every opportunity to express your gratitude for their participation and affirm the benefits of their involvement.

Next, you should make a list of persons that you will approach either by correspondence or direct contact. You should not rely on a single individual or organization to underwrite your trip. The more people that can be involved in investing, the more that will reap the benefits. Start with the relationships that you presently have - family, friends, relatives, church members - and move on to acquaintances past and present. It is also good to pursue Christian churches, organizations and businesses. Don't discount any unbelievers who are familiar with you from getting involved.

Now it is time to initiate contact with the individuals on your list. Those that are outside of your area can receive the letter that you have produced. Perhaps you can follow-up your mailing with a phone call after sufficient time has passed for them to receive and review the letter. At this point you may consider any situation which would allow you to make a presentation with a number of people in attendance like church services or home Bible studies. The proper channels of authority must always be respected before you go in this direction.

There are two ways that you can approach communicating your need:

1. **Apologetically** asking for a donation. This is a beggar mentality and does not exude confidence or excitement about your mission trip. If you are not excited, don't expect others to be. Remember, you are not raising money for yourself, but for your mission.

2. **Opportunistically** asking for an investment. Your trip is a chance to build God's Kingdom and any contribution into the work is an investment that will secure eternal rewards as well as present blessings. It is a privilege to give.

One of the great advantages in raising funds for a short-term mission is that you are only looking for a one-time offering as opposed to a long-term commitment. There is no need to use pressure or hype tactics when making your presentation. Your confidence and genuine enthusiasm for the trip will be highly convincing. As people respond, keep accurate records of who has given and how much. Send off an immediate reply thanking them for their gift and assure them that you will give a report on the trip when you return.

As you approach people, allow them two avenues for involvement: prayer and

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finances. Prayer partners are as valuable as financial contributors. If an individual chooses not to be involved financially, let them know their prayers are extremely important to a successful trip. Inform them of the specific areas which they can target in prayer and give them a report summarizing your mission when it is over.

Another profitable way of raising funds is through special projects. This area is particularly successful when a short-term mission team is being sent from a church. The team can participate together in a variety of activities ranging from car washes, to bake sales, to benefit ball games which will produce a portion or the entire amount of funds needed. Develop some creative ideas for projects, make a plan, set some goals and include as many team members as possible. After the money has been collected, distribute it according to a prearranged plan.

Even on an individual level, there are many creative ideas that can be employed to bring in needed funds. You can possibly make some service available or perhaps sell items that you have or that you intend to make.

When you have returned from your short-term mission, make it a priority to report back to those who helped make your trip a successful reality through prayer and finances. Personalize your report without being too wordy, and, once again, express your appreciation for their partnership.

If you enter the arena of fund raising with a healthy attitude, meet the challenge and refuse to limit God in the process, you will, no doubt, see all that you need provided.

REQUIREMENTS FOR TRAVEL AND ENTRY:

• Valid and current passport

Everyone traveling out of the United States needs to have a valid U.S. passport. A passport is basically an international identity card which proves your citizenship. It is required for most countries of the world. Your passport is the most important document in your possession while traveling, and it should be carried at all times. If it is ever lost or stolen, it may possibly delay your departure from the country you are visiting. It can also be a lot of trouble to replace, so keep it safe. Your passport will often be needed to transact business as a foreigner (i.e. hotel registration, currency exchange, etc.)

The procedure for obtaining a passport is fairly simple. For first-time passport applicants, you must apply in person at any passport office, federal or state courthouse, or U.S. post office which is authorized to accept passport

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applications. You will need the following when applying:

- * Two identical passport photos. A particular size photo is required and photographic studios will advertise this service in the phone book. AAA provides this service as well.
- * A certified copy of your birth certificate. If you do not have one in your possession, write to the Health or Records Division of the State in which you were born. Order extra copies and carry one along on your trip in case you happen to lose your passport.
- * A completed passport application.
- * A check for \$65.00 for a passport valid for 10 years.
- * A valid driver's license.

Apply at least eight weeks before the travel date to insure that your passport will be returned on time. **It is wise to use certified or an express mail service when you send important documents through the postal system.** You can apply or include return postage on items being returned to you.

If you have a valid passport that is expired, you may submit a renewal application, the required fee, and the expired passport to an authorized passport office in your area.

As an extra precaution, write down your passport number, expiration date and place issued and carry it separately from your passport.

• *Visas or special permits*

Most countries of the world have specific visa requirements in order to enter. To find out what these conditions are you can contact the nation's consulate or embassy. A good travel agency can also help. Ask what type of visa or permit is needed to enter. There are different kinds of visas available depending on where you are going (multiple entry, limited time, occupational status, etc.). Be specific about the kind of visa you are requesting. On most visa applications you will need the exact dates of your arrival and departure from the country. Be careful what you state as the reason for your visit because many countries don't officially permit missionaries or preachers. On all official documents it is best to declare that you are traveling "as a tourist". A minister stating his occupation can specify "teacher".

In applying for a visa, a U.S. citizen needs only their valid passport and a completed visa application, accompanied by a passport type photo and any fee necessary.

In some instances a tourist card will be necessary to enter a country. These may be purchased in the States or upon entry at your destination.

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Be certain to thoroughly investigate any requirements needed to enter the nation that you are traveling to.

- ***Extra passport photos***

These may be necessary when completing different forms and applications that are needed during the course of travel, so bring a couple of extra along.

- ***Monetary requirements***

Some places require that you declare the amount of currency you are bringing into the country. You will have to report what you are leaving with as well. This is their way of controlling their own currency from leaving the country. You may also be required to pay entry fees or tourist/visitors tax when staying for an extended period. You may be asked to produce proof that you have sufficient finances for sustenance during your time in the country. Check with officials about correct procedures and fees before leaving the States to insure what fees are required so that you will not be unduly charged or conned.

In other places, it may be required that you exchange a certain amount of US dollars into the foreign currency. In order to exchange the local currency back into dollars when leaving, you will need to produce proof (currency exchange documents) that you, in fact, did exchange a specific amount of dollars, and the total returned to you cannot exceed the amount you originally exchanged.

There is an airport departure tax levied when leaving many countries. Be sure to put sufficient aside, and check to see what type of payment will be accepted as payment.

- ***Round trip tickets***

Passing through immigration when you enter, you may have to produce your airline tickets to prove that you are intending to leave and that you have tickets to do so.

- ***Name and address of contact***

Immigration officials will ask you to produce the name and address of the people you will be staying with while visiting the country. You may need to produce a hotel name in the city of your destination. Have this information handy.

- ***International Driver's License***

Although your transportation will probably be arranged by your host, you may want to research the transportation requirements before leaving if you plan to

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drive yourself. Most European and some Latin American countries require an International Driver's license. This is valid in approximately 100 countries. It may be purchased from AAA or a Driver's Licensing Agency in your state.

Entry procedure

Once you have arrived at your destination you will be directed from the aircraft to the immigration control point.

1. Immigration

Have your immigration/visitors card completed when you step up to the immigration official. These are distributed on the airplane or upon arriving at your destination. Do not misplace or discard this form. It will be required upon leaving the country and may be needed to be carried on your person while in the country.

In speaking with immigration officials your self-presentation should be relaxed, confident, pleasant, courteous and grateful. Maintain good eye contact and keep your answers brief and to the point.

Remember, when filling out your immigration card, you can declare your occupational status as a "teacher" if you are a minister, depending on the religious tolerance in the area you are going. The purpose of your visit can be educational or simply "tourist".

Be prepared to give the official the name and address of the place you will be staying, the purpose of your visit, and how long you will be there.

2. Clearing customs

Be prepared to open all luggage and sealed packages. There are few countries that will let you pass without examining your luggage. Have luggage key(s) or combination easily available, along with a pocket knife and tape to open and seal any boxes. Pack before leaving for easy inspection. Before you leave, find out what items are permitted or prohibited to pass through customs in the country you are going to. You want to avoid having any items confiscated or paying excessive amounts of duty fees. Get the proper authorization before leaving if you are planning on taking anything that might be a problem, such as electrical items or equipment, religious literature, food, etc. Officials are suspicious of any packaged goods or items that may appear they are for resale. Take any new products out of their original packaging.

Prepare an itemized packing list, on official letterhead, of any equipment that you will not be leaving in the country, to be presented to custom officials. Specify any items or gifts that you will be leaving in the country. Many times gifts in the form of literature or equipment, donated from one non-profit

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organization to another will not be taxed, but these items must be specified on appropriate letterhead with a corporate seal.

After clearing customs, proceed to the area provided for meeting your party or to an information booth to have them paged. If you do not make contact, call your party on the telephone.

INOCULATIONS AND HEALTH PRECAUTIONS

Travelers planning to visit any third-world countries, especially those in the tropics, are advised to get any required immunization shots and possibly those that are not required, but recommended. Because some of the vaccinations must be given over a period of several weeks, it is essential that you start your immunization process far enough in advance of your trip to give adequate time to complete the series of shots. The most common vaccinations required for overseas travel are:

Cholera	Hepatitis	Tetanus
Polio	Malaria	Typhoid fever
Smallpox	Yellow fever	Diphtheria

Check with your travel agent, local health department or the tourism office of the country to which you are traveling for immunization requirements or recommendations. Immunization information and advisories can also be obtained from the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta, Georgia.

All immunizations should be recorded and validated on an International Certificate of Vaccination which may be obtained from the U.S. Public Health Service or most doctor's offices. Carry the certificate with your passport. You may be required to show proof of immunization against certain diseases before you will be allowed to enter the country.

If you suffer from any illness, take medication for a particular ailment, or if any physical restrictions may affect you, let your leader or host know in advance. It is prudent to have a note from your doctor to verify your condition, in addition to a copy of prescriptions for any medication you are taking and a list of side effects. Leave all medications that you are taking along in their original, labeled bottles.

There are some additional items you can take along to help with the common affects of travel and a new culture upon your system. For digestive upset: Lomotil, Pepto-Bismal, Roloids, TUMS, Kaopectate, acidophilus. For motion sickness: Dramamine or Bonine. Other items that are handy are nasal spray, lip balm, eye drops, insect repellent, Sleepeze. Consult your doctor on recommendations for other items to take along.

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In some countries the water has not been adequately purified to prevent the transmission of diseases, dysentery in particular. If the purity of any water is questionable, it is best not to drink it at all. Drink purified bottled water, soft drinks, brewed tea or coffee. Many hotels that cater to foreign visitors either provide bottled drinking water or purify their running water. Ice cubes may also contaminate drinks in areas where the water is particularly unsanitary.

Visitors to the tropical countries should take precautions while in the sun. Wear a wide brim hat and use a strong sunscreen.

Dealing with Jet Lag

For every time zone a traveler crosses, it takes about one day for the body to adjust to new time cues. Jet lag only occurs when flying east or west across time zones, and not when flying north or south.

Individuals vary greatly in their susceptibility to jet lag. Young travelers are least affected because their bodies adapt quickly. People with rigid eating and sleeping habits are more affected than those with erratic schedules. Highly motivated people and people traveling in groups are sometimes less affected because they must adjust quickly - they are on an already tight schedule.

People tend to suffer less from jet lag when traveling from east to west because our bodies adapt more quickly to a longer day. West to east travel is more difficult because the sun rises earlier, and our bodies don't believe a full night has passed.

You can diminish the effects of jet lag by resetting your biological clock. You can try to adapt to a new zone at home by eating your meals and going to sleep one hour earlier each night for three or four days preceding your trip, if you are traveling eastward. For westward travelers, stay awake longer and eat later than usual.

Some ways to help reduce jet lag:

- Start out well rested.
- Set your watch to the local time before landing and try to adopt the sleeping and eating patterns of the new location as quickly as possible. If possible, avoid sleeping in the daytime when you arrive.
- If you are traveling at night, try to sleep or nap on the plane.
- Don't overeat while flying. Drink plenty of water or juice to stay hydrated. Avoid caffeine and sweetened soft drinks. Try to do some isometric exercises in your seat.

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- If you are traveling more than twenty-four hours, try to stay overnight at an intermediate point.
- Spend time in the sun and open air when you arrive.

MONETARY CONSIDERATIONS:

Before leaving you should be familiar with the monetary standard and the exchange process and procedures in the country you are visiting. If you are traveling to more than one country, you have more research to do.

It is prudent to exchange a small amount of US dollars into the currency you will be using, before you leave the U.S. When you arrive you may need some, and the bureau of exchange might not be opened. Your host will be helpful in informing you about the local exchange process. At times your host may want to exchange currency for you so that they can have the US dollars themselves.

You should also research which credit cards are accepted at your destination, and leave any unnecessary cards behind.

Don't assume that traveler's checks are easily exchanged at your destination. However, if you know they are accepted, American Express Traveler's Checks are the best choice because they can be replaced easier if lost or stolen. Some places will offer a higher rate of exchange for traveler's checks, but in others, every check is taxed. Don't carry large denominations (\$100.00 or even \$50.00) in checks; they are too difficult to exchange.

You can assume that wherever you are going, personal checks will probably not be received.

Be careful to guard your cash and valuables, (wallets, purses, jewelry). Thieves, con-men, black-marketeers, and the like thrive on ignorant and careless foreigners and tourists. Don't travel with unnecessary valuables.

PRACTICAL PREPARATIONS

Prior to your departure you should study all you can about the country you are visiting: its people, customs, language, traditions, foods, government, recent history, etc. Know the major cities and where they are located. If possible, speak with some of the natives that you may have contact with in the U.S.

It is unrealistic to expect that you will be fluent or articulate in the language before leaving, especially if you have not ever studied it previously. Nevertheless, you should attempt to master some common phrases that are used,

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(i.e. Good-day; How are you?; please and thank you, etc.) Some may wish to go further and learn enough grammar to converse and possibly witness to the Gospel. Usually every attempt to use the national language will be warmly received. You will find people are very patient and willing to help you learn.

Your preparation should focus on your spiritual readiness as well. Sufficient time in study, meditation and prayer should be allowed proportionate to the amount of ministry you will be doing. Your prayers should target your own spiritual edification; those to whom you will be ministering, including your host; others who will accompany you in travel; health and protection for all people and possessions; favor with all authorities; and the loved ones and everyone that has made it possible for you to go.

MAKING TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

When making travel arrangements, check with at least two agencies for the best price. There are some travel agencies that specialize in missionary travel (see Resource section).

Although many airlines have comparable fares for routes to the same destination, not all offer identical service. The major carriers are the most reliable with little risk of the unexpected. When there are unexpected delays or changes, they will also be more helpful in accommodating passengers. What you save in money on some foreign based air carriers you may sacrifice in service offered.

There may be several different routes available to your destination. Consider that the route which is more reasonable in price could be more inconvenient in a number of ways (i.e. length of flights and layovers, congestion). When choosing an airline for a long haul flight, the rule is to choose the carrier with the fewest stops, not only to avoid fatigue, but also to reduce the chance of incurring delays while on the ground.

Make the necessary reservations at least one month ahead of time. Much longer may be necessary for a savings on some flights. Usually if you pay for your ticket 30 days in advance, it is significantly less expensive. There are usually discounts and benefits for group travel. Consider the advantages of frequent flyers programs on the airline on which you are traveling. If you will be traveling by bus, train, boat, or automobile, make these arrangements before leaving, if possible.

If you are connecting onto a domestic flight, it is helpful to know the proximity of the domestic airport to the international. Upon debarking the aircraft, check airport information for discrepancies or changes in your itinerary. **Always**

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reconfirm international flights 48 hours before the flight.

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PACKING TIPS

Pack with the purpose of your trip, destination, length of stay and travel activities in mind. Before you start, make a list of the items you need to take. This will speed up the packing process and lessen the possibility of forgetting something. Keep this list in your carry-on bag. If bags are delayed or lost, the list of contents will help identify them.

Most people, when they begin traveling, pack about twice as much as they need. Travel light. Pack only what you can carry yourself. Mix and match wardrobe and accessories. Build around one basic color with outfits that can be coordinated. You can save space by carrying small quantities in toiletries. A good tip is to walk around the block with everything you will be taking with you - then decide what you can possibly leave behind.

Climate is an important consideration. Even in warm climates, take a long a sweater or jacket for evenings, when temperatures can drop significantly.

Culture must also be taken into account. Include clothing that respects the customs and sensitivities of the nationals. Leave behind the conspicuous, outrageous and extravagant, or anything that may be offensive where you are going.

Find out what laundering arrangements or facilities are available at your destination before leaving.

Determine what voltage and amperage the local electricity runs on (220 or 110) in the country. You may need a transformer and converter outlet plug for any electrical accessories that you are taking along.

There is a definite advantage to traveling with only carry-on baggage. With 5 or 6 days worth of clothing, you can send out your clothes to be laundered or, if you are staying with someone with washing facilities, you can wash your own. Traveling in this way, you never have to wait for luggage and it will speed up your time through customs.

Be sure to check with each airline you are traveling with about baggage allowance requirements and restrictions on weight and dimensions. Extra luggage or excessive weight may be very expensive. International flights and domestic flights often differ on these requirements. There may also be a difference depending on whether you are coming or going.

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Hard sided luggage is best. It is not easy to damage or steal from. Mark your baggage with colored tape to avoid confusion at the baggage claim area. Indicate your name, address and phone number on the outside of your luggage and on valuables. If possible, use closed luggage tags to conceal this information. Fasten your bags with combination locks. As you check in, be sure your luggage is correctly tagged for your destination.

Carry on board with you any valuables and important documents including money, travelers checks, passport, tickets, travel documents, credit cards, jewelry, keys, medication and camera. Airlines typically will not be responsible for these items if checked. Also consider taking a language dictionary, a Bible or other reading material for study or leisure, a change of clothing in case your checked luggage is delayed, toiletries that you will use in transit, a cassette player and headphones. Keep carry-on luggage with you at all times.

There are advantages to traveling in either casual or business attire. Informal, loose fitting clothes are definitely more comfortable, but people that are dressed up are often treated better.

You might consider carrying a pair of warm socks. Your feet will swell a little on long flights and you will be more comfortable if you take your shoes off and put on the socks.

Make a copy of your passport, travelers checks, credit cards, itinerary, airline tickets and other travel documents, and leave it with a relative or friend.

Some additional items you may wish to take along are a camera and film, pictures of your family, gifts for your host, names and addresses of people back home, address and phone number of the U.S. embassy.

REENTRY AND EVALUATION

Just about the time that you think your trip has come to an end, you are going to encounter culture shock in reverse. This can be more overwhelming than what you experienced leaving home and entering another country; especially if you are not prepared. Reverse culture shock is a sudden reality of a condition you have lived in, perhaps, for a long time. Your eyes have been opened in a fresh new way to things that you have previously taken for granted. This experience can prove to be depressing and invigorating at the same time. You may sense an overpowering gratitude for all the comforts and conveniences of home, and concurrently be weighted with guilt that others are suffering, sacrificing, surviving far below your living standard. This is just one example of conflicting emotions that are often present.

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For the first time traveler it will take some time to work through the emotional highs and lows of being back home. One part of you is glad to be back in familiar surroundings, with people you love and who love you. Another part of you has become attached to the people you have left behind. You miss the closeness you have developed with team members and the excitement of new and different experiences. You also may carry the burden of need that you have witnessed.

One method of helping you deal with some of these conflicting emotions is to view your North American culture as distinctive and exceptional. Prosperity and progress in our nation has brought us to a standard of living that we do not have to apologize for, nor feel guilty about. What may be considered extravagance and opulence in another part of the world is actually necessity and basic provision in our own culture.

During your time of readjustment, it is a good idea to stay in touch with team members and others with missions experience that can identify with your feelings and help you to interpret them in a positive way.

Typically the returning missionary [hero] anticipates the celebrated reception that they will receive when they arrive home. You might envision anxious listeners hanging on your every word as you recount your experiences, enthusiastically rejoicing over all that God has done, and sharing your renewed commitment to Christ and for reaching a lost and dying world.

As was shared earlier in this manual, unrealistic expectations can lead to frustration and disappointment. What you may possibly encounter upon returning is the apparent apathy and complacency among Christian believers at home, the indifference towards the testimonies of God's goodness that you witnessed, and the general lack of interest in any change that has taken place in you.

Don't despair and don't become bitter! You may have been in the same place they are before you went and experienced for yourself. Besides, any guilt or condemnation that you heap on the seemingly unconcerned believers will do nothing but breed division and resentment. You want to remain in a position to help them become a world Christian. As you demonstrate your renewed zeal and commitment - your actions will speak louder than your words.

Returning home is a good time to review your journal and follow through with the life changing experiences and decisions that have resulted from your trip. Remembering and rehearsing what has transpired will help you to maintain a fresh vision for world missions.

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A returning team should evaluate each segment of their trip, discussing areas that could be improved or changed; also those portions that were most fulfilling.

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IN CONCLUSION

Since 1980 I have had many opportunities to travel on short-term missions around the world, visiting over 50 countries. Going alone and also serving in the capacity of leader and team member, I have often felt that there isn't much that I have not seen or experienced; but invariably something new comes along. That is why this manual is not a complete reference. It just covers the basics. Perhaps you will be able to add several points of your own when you have gone and returned.

Let me encourage you to use what has spoken to you in these pages. Don't let the amount of information intimidate or discourage you from going through with your plans for a short-term mission. Just assimilate what you are able, and believe the Holy Spirit will bring to your remembrance what you need for the moment.

For those who are traveling with a group, small or large, these contents should be discussed and reviewed together in order to receive the most benefit.

Reflecting on past trips, many has been the time that I have wished more time could have been devoted to preparation and training. This work is produced for that specific purpose. It will give you a head start and a better chance for a completely successful mission.

It is my earnest hope and prayer that this manual will have prepared you adequately for a life changing mission adventure. **Launch out into the deep!**