

Introduction

Dear Team Member,

I am excited that you have decided to participate in the Great Commission by going on a short-term project. In the months ahead, you and your team will be trained and equipped to be representatives of Jesus Christ to people and cultures that are far different from ours here in suburban Ohio! Jesus has called each of us to make disciples of all nations, and this is our goal as a missions department. I want to encourage you to be intentional about being a disciple-maker by pursuing intimacy with God, developing community with your team and the Christian nationals overseas, and influencing non-Christians to develop a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Your team will be supporting one of our partnerships or missionaries. Your trip is a significant piece of a long-term strategy between New Life and each specific ministry. Each of these ministries is having a significant impact on people's lives, and people every day are making decisions that have eternal significance. I want to encourage you to remember that though your role might be teaching English or swinging a hammer, the goal of your trip is not English speaking students or finished buildings. The goal is changed lives, and we are trusting that lives will be changed as a result of you playing a key role on your team.

In order for your team to be effective, it is imperative that you support your team leaders. They have already invested time into extra training and are doing their best to take care of all the details related to the trip. They are counting on you to have a servant's heart and an attitude of flexibility. I trust that you will display these qualities to others just as Christ demonstrated these qualities to you.

I praise God for your willingness to serve Him on a short-term project!

Cindy Schmidt
Director of Missions & Outreach
New Life Church, Gahanna, Ohio

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Chapter 1: Team Preparation

Mission, Strategy, and Vision

The purpose of New Life Missions & Outreach Ministries is to:

- Fulfill the Great Commission by supporting and encouraging church planting, and
- Obey the Great Commandment by providing humanitarian aid and evangelistic outreach.

Welcome to the team! We are excited for you to be a part of what God is doing around the world to lead the people of other nations into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ. It is our prayer that through this short-term trip you would experience God in a new and fresh way. It is our hope that your team will be successful in strategically helping our partnerships and missionaries both locally and abroad.

It is our goal as Missions & Outreach to equip you and your team to be adequately prepared for your trip. We have put this manual together because we believe that the things covered here are imperative to the success of your trip. You and your team will go through this manual during the preparation time, and you will be expected to read through all of this material so that you will be ready to participate with your team on your specific project.

We cannot change the hearts of anyone - especially in the span of a couple of weeks. We are not going to try to get people to pray a prayer or walk down an aisle. All we can do is create a relevant environment for the Holy Spirit to work. We should see ourselves as bricklayers in a bridge that will lead people to Christ. You may have the opportunity to be there when that last brick is laid in someone's life when they accept Jesus Christ as their Savior. But, you may also place the first one down or more likely you will put one down somewhere in the middle. Remember that it is the Holy Spirit's job to lead people to Christ and not ours.

Expectations

You have been chosen to go on a New Life Missions & Outreach trip. You will not only be representing yourself, but also your team, your country, New Life Church, and Jesus Christ. You are going to strategically help one of our partnerships or missionaries locally or abroad. I encourage you to consider that ultimately, your team exists to bring glory to God. Here are a few expectations we have as you prepare to be a part of this ministry team.

Personal: By being on this team, you are committing to be a part of a team. We are expecting you to prepare spiritually, mentally, and physically for this trip.

- Spiritually, we expect you to have a regular quiet time and an active prayer life during the preparation time as well as during the trip. Spiritual warfare is real, and we expect each team member to be intentional about developing intimacy with God and a dependence on Him. We encourage daily devotional and prayer times in order to

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promote intimacy with God. You and your team will probably be out of your comfort zone, and this is a prime environment for trusting the Lord and allowing His Holy Spirit to work in your life.

- Mentally, we expect you to come with an attitude of service and flexibility. We also expect you to make an effort to understand the culture and people of your host country or ministry.
- Physically, we expect you to prepare for the part of the ministry project that you will be responsible for and to be a contributor on your team.

Team: Your team will be responsible for preparing and carrying out a specific project. We expect your team to strive for excellence in accomplishing the project and to serve the host missionary or partnership to the best of your ability. We are excited to see how God will work through your team to reach the nations!

First Things First

Passports: You should apply for your passport immediately. The most current information about obtaining your passport is found at the State Department website: www.travel.state.gov. You can download the correct forms, find current fees, and locate an office near your home. Upon receiving your passport, sign it and make three copies of the front page (with your picture on it). You will need to give two copies to your team leader and take one copy with you on the project. You should have a copy of your passport on you at all times while you are traveling.

Tickets and Insurance: New Life will handle all of the travel arrangements for your team. We will need several things from you in order to secure these.

- Name as it appears on your passport
- Date of birth
- Country of citizenship
- Passport number or Social Security number

Finances: The cost of the trip includes all travel arrangements, visas, meals, housing and transportation while on locations, and emergency travel insurance. Not included in the cost are passport fees, shots and immunizations, personal souvenirs, personal items, and snacks.

Immunizations: The team leader will provide you with information on any shots required for the trip. Though many of the locations we will be traveling to do not require any immunizations, it is important to have your regular shots up to date (especially tetanus). You should be aware of the CDC recommended travel immunizations and consult your doctor concerning those recommended immunizations. The official website for the Center for Disease Control (CDC) is www.cdc.gov.

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Team Preparation

Goals of team preparation: Normally, it requires three to four months for a team to prepare for a short-term mission project. Much of the training and preparation occurs during periodic team meetings. Your team leader will supply you with a schedule of your team meetings, and we require that you attend 80% of these meetings. We require this because we feel so strongly that team preparation is vitally important to the success of your team. One important aspect of team preparation is team unity. Individual and team prayer is one of the best methods for building team unity that will withstand the difficulties and spiritual warfare the team will face on the field.

Field Ministry: The team leader will have a clear and complete understanding of how the team will be ministering in the field. The preparation process will occur mainly during team meetings, and homework assignments will be necessary to help get the team ready to accomplish the ministry goals once the team arrives at the field destination. While the ministry training should be intentional and specific, the team must also be prepared to be flexible with the ministry plan once they arrive in the field. We have found that a well-prepared ministry team will be very flexible carrying out the ministry objectives.

The team leaders and the missions department are ultimately responsible for preparing the team for the mission project. However, each team member must also see it as their responsibility to be an active member of the team in order to make the trip successful. You will therefore want to assist the leaders in initiating and implementing the many areas of preparation.

Team Covenant: Each team is asked to discuss and sign a team covenant. This is meant to give a frame of reference for what the team should expect from each other. Your team will walk through the team covenant and sign it as a joint agreement of how the team will interact while on the trip. The following page contains the general covenant that New Life has put together, but the teams are encouraged to add to it depending on their needs.

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Short Term Trip Covenant

As a member of this short-term mission team, I commit to actively participate and support the whole team to accomplish the goals of our particular project. I recognize that by being a part of this team I am agreeing to the following:

Developing my personal relationship with Jesus Christ: I commit to discipline myself and put a priority on growing deeper in my walk with Christ during the whole preparation process and during our project assignment. This includes:

- Having a substantial quiet time of Bible study and prayer at least five days per week.
- Praying diligently for the members of my team, the partnership, and opportunities to share my faith.

Developing an attitude of service and flexibility: I commit to serve the team, the team leader, and the missionaries on the field. I will bring an understanding spirit and flexibility to the project as I understand things will be different cross-culturally.

Supporting my team leader and my team: I will follow the rules and standard of behavior set by my team and team leader to the best of my ability. I realize that this trip only lasts a short time, and while I am a part of this team, I will:

- Attend 80% of the team meetings, and be an active participant in all group activities.
- Submit to the authority of the team leader(s).
- Seek to be sensitive to the culture in my words and actions.
- Refrain from any activity or behavior that might be a stumbling block to my team, our partnership ministry, or the people I am seeking to influence. I will be especially careful to treat those of the opposite gender as a brother or sister in Christ and refrain from romantic relationships.

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Raising Support

Introduction: First of all, it is important to remember that God is in control and He wants to demonstrate His power and faithfulness. One of my favorite quotes is from the missionary Hudson Taylor, "God's work, done in God's way, will not lack God's resources." Many people have found that their faith was strengthened through watching God provide for their finances while participating in short-term mission projects.

The key concept in raising support for short-term mission projects is to understand that this is a ministry. The individuals and the teams are not just "raising support," they are giving other members of the church, and other Christians, an opportunity to be part of their short-term project. In other words, they are building a larger team than the team that goes to the field. They are building a total team composed of some who send, some who pray and some who go.

Developing a support team: Each individual team member will be responsible for developing his or her own support team. Although this chapter deals with raising funds, it is important to keep in mind that the ultimate objective is not just raising money, but it is building a viable supporting team. Funding will be one natural outgrowth of the team-building concept. The most important need for each team member who goes on a short-term project is to have people who will commit to keeping the team member, and the team, before the Lord in prayer during all phases of the project. This is essential to the success of the project.

Funds: The first source of funds that you should look to is yourself. If you are able to use your own money, then that should be your first choice. Once you prayerfully decide how much you are going to contribute, it is time to start building your support team. Through this chapter you will learn how to write a support letter for distribution to friends, family members, co-workers and church members. You will probably find that many of them are happy to have the opportunity to invest in a worthwhile project overseas that you are excited about.

First step — prepare the team list: Each short-term project team member should develop a list of people they want on their team, not just those whom they think will give money. Remember if the prayer support is in place first, then everything else will eventually fall into place. This can also be a neat opportunity to share with non-Christian friends and family members as you tell them about what you are doing and why you are going. Prayerfully prepare a list of about thirty names of people you feel God wants on your team. These people should not all be from New Life. Remember to consider friends, family members, co-workers and church members you know from New Life and other churches.

Write the letter: You are asking people to join you as partners in the mission experience. Ask them to help with the costs that you will incur by going as well as the ministry costs associated with the trip. A common testimony from former team members is that while they were initially hesitant toward the idea of sending support letters, the experience turned out to be a highlight

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of the entire trip. Remember, you are not begging for money, you are building a team of prayer and financial supporters. To be self-conscious about recruiting team support members will rob others of the privilege of vicariously going as your partner.

It is very important that you write your own letter. Sample letters will be provided, but do not copy from a sample letter. Remember, you are sending the letter to people who know you. Your personality and your style should be evident in the letter. People prefer to read a personal letter.

Include the following in the letter:

- Information about the culture and country where you are going
- Information about New Life and your host on the field
- A description of what the team will be doing
- Answer the question, "Why is the team going?"
- Answer the question: "Why do you want to be involved in this project?"
- A request for the recipient to be a team member with you on your project
- A specific request as to how you desire their involvement: as a prayer warrior, financial sponsor or both
- A description of the cost of the project for you individually and how much you are going to contribute. Everyone should be contributing some of their own funds. If we are going to ask others to give, they should know that we are contributing as well.
- An explanation with the letter stating how the check should be made out, and when and where it should be sent.

Payment: Tell your supporters to make their checks payable to New Life Church and mail directly to Bookkeeper, New Life Church, 3690 Stygler Rd., Gahanna, OH 43230. They should put the name of your trip on the memo line (example: Costa Rica Trip)

Send the letter: Send the letter to potential supporters by the deadline set by the team leader. New Life does not provide team members with postage or envelopes. Ideally the support letter should be sent out two months prior to the time when all of the funds are needed. You may want to write a quick reminder or follow-up letter a month after the initial letter.

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Sample Support Letter

Dear Family and Friends,

As you know, I have been attending New Life Church for the last two years. I am writing this letter because I wanted to let you know that I have decided to go on a short-term mission trip to the Dominican Republic this summer. Our church is partnering with a church and Compassion school in Higüey, Dominican Republic, and our team is going to help work with the children and youth in their city from June 20 - 28.

You may wonder why I have decided to travel at this time, and the answer is simple. I feel that I have been given much, and I feel that God desires me to use the gifts and abilities that He has given me to impact people's lives. Our team will be working with children and youth during the day as school is out and there is not much for them to do. We will be putting on a sports camp for the older youth and a Vacation Bible School for the children. Through all of these activities, we hope to have fun, to build relationships with the children and youth, and to bring them the hope that we have found through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Our church has been working with Good News Church in Higüey since 1989. The church has started three churches around the city as well as a Compassion school for the community. The church is trying to reach their communities by building into the children. New Life Church sees this church as strategically making an impact in Higüey, and I am excited to participate this year.

The reason I am writing this letter is because I want to put together a support team who will be willing to pray for our team, give towards this project, or both. We need prayer for wisdom as we seek to meet people's needs in another culture, and we also need prayer for safety as we travel. Financially, I need to raise \$1000 to cover the cost of expenses as well as the cost of putting on these programs in the DR. I am going to contribute \$500 of my personal money, but I would like to raise the other \$500. I will need all funds by June 1. Checks should be made out to New Life Church with "DR trip" on the memo line. Send the check to me at the address below. All donations for this project are tax-deductible. Thank you for considering supporting this project. If you have any questions, please let me know and I will be glad to answer them. God bless you.

Sincerely,

Jane Brown
9876 Jefferson St.
Gahanna, OH 43230
614-987-6543

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THINGS TO REMEMBER WHEN WRITING SUPPORT LETTERS

(Courtesy of Campus Crusade for Christ)

Suggested guidelines:

- **KEEP IT SHORT!!**
- Be as honest and transparent as you can be - feel free to adapt this letter to YOUR personality.
- Use positive sounding words in your writing style.
- Share why you believe God is having you go; share your vision of what could happen on this trip.
- Tell the reader the benefits of joining with you in this project. (PARTNERSHIP!)
- Don't be apologetic about asking for money.
- Choose a high quality paper and envelope. Cast a professional, trustworthy image.
- When possible, make the first paragraph specific to the reader. A letter written to everyone is less likely to be read and less likely to generate the response you desire.
- Select a highly readable font such as Times New Roman, use 12 point font size (no smaller than 11 pt.).
- Include a quality head & shoulders printed photo of you as a graphic on the letter.
- Use correct grammar, but write in an easy-flowing, conversational manner.
- Keep typewritten paragraphs to six lines or less. **Shorter paragraphs** enhance the readability of the copy.
- Double-space between paragraphs. This creates more white space and makes it look easier to read.
- Indent paragraphs for greater readability and personalization.
- Keep sentence structure simple and uncomplicated. Guard against using incomplete sentences.
- Use correct spelling. When in doubt, look it up!
- Vary paragraph beginnings.
- Always give your letter a specific date.
- Think of your letter as a funnel that moves the reader from the general to the specific.

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LETTER OUTLINE

Date: Month, Day, Year

Dear: Specific person's name

Introduction: Begin with a couple of sentences to grab their attention and tell them why you are writing. You may want to include a quick run-down on recent events in your life. This could be the first time they've received a letter from you.

Announcement: Tell them what God is calling you to do. Announce the trip or project and share your vision of how God will use you. Share why you need to go. Cast a vision or paint a picture for the need.

Further Details: Share more specifics about the trip (purpose, strategy, what you will specifically do). Share what you can expect to see accomplished.

Partnership: Express your need for others to help send you (focus on a sense of teamwork and partnership between you and the reader).

The Ask: Share the total amount you need and ask them if they would consider a gift towards your trip. Enclose a response card giving different levels of commitment along with a self-addressed stamped envelope. Tell them who the check should be made payable to (write this in the letter as well as on the response card).

Close: Thank them for their consideration of partnering with you in this wonderful opportunity.

Your Signature

Enclosures: Response card; self-addressed stamped envelope; prayer card/trip brochure.

RESPONSE DEVICE

You could put a response device in your mailing such as the one below. Response devices help the reader make a choice of how much to give by dividing the overall budget into various dollar amounts they can choose from. This can be a separate card or a section at the bottom of the letter.

Yes! I will partner with you:

Africa Adventure

I'm sending a gift of... \$50 \$100 \$200 \$ _____ to help fund your trip.

Yes, I'll commit to praying for you. Keep me posted on your needs!

Name _____

Phone _____

E-mail: _____

All gifts are tax deductible. Please make check payable to "**New Life Church**" and write the trip name on the memo line (i.e. Costa Rica Trip) and mail in the enclosed envelope.

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Sample letter:

Barbara Smith

123 Missionary Lane
San Clemente, CA 92673

Specific date

Dear (merge or type name),

I want to share with you a wonderful opportunity I have coming up this summer. It is my prayer that as you read this letter you will consider joining with me as a partner in a unique opportunity to minister to the poor in Costa Rica. This summer, our team from New Life will partner with the folks at Harvest Hands, a grass-roots ministry that serves the poor in a forgotten village just outside of San Jose. Our team will build a home (a “yellow house”) for a family in need, providing them a clean, dry home as well as an introduction to the Body of Christ and God’s great plan of salvation. By investing in their community, we “earn the right” to be heard. We will also be working within the community, ministering to drug and alcohol addicts, single moms, children, and the elderly. As I am a fluent Spanish speaker, and also have construction skills, I feel I will be a valuable asset to this team.

Would you please consider partnering with me, both prayerfully and financially, to enable me to go and share Christ’s love with the people of Los Anonos? My total need is \$1500. I have earned \$500 so far with my part-time job and need the final thousand by the end of May. In order to meet this goal as quickly as possible, one-time investments of \$50, \$100, \$200 or more are needed. Please make your check payable to “(your church name here)”. Then mail your check to me in the enclosed envelope (your investment will then be tax-deductible).

Thank you so much for prayerfully considering partnering with me as I minister to the poor in Costa Rica. Feel free to follow along with our team on our blog at www.missiontoCR.org – keep my prayer card in a convenient place so you can remember to pray for us as we travel. May God bless you abundantly for sharing in the Great Commission.

In His Love,

Michael Missionary

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GIFT

Write a thank you note to those who support you. You may consider bringing back a small gift from the place you visit as well as sending/delivering a wrap-up letter when you return home telling about the trip itself. Make sure your donors can follow along with your blog or otherwise share your adventure. **Please don’t spend their money and leave them hanging!**

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Sample Follow-up Letter

Dear Faithful Supporter:

I want to let you know how your prayers and financial support made a difference in Romania this summer. I cannot begin to express how great God is in answering prayer. Our team was able to put on the English camp, and there were over 90 Romanian students who attended. Most of these were not Christians, and this camp made significant changes in people's lives.

At the camp, I helped to lead a small group discussion every morning where we studied a passage of the Bible and talked about how it applies to our lives. We stayed with the same small group all week long, and I was able to build special relationships with those nine people in my small group. We have been emailing ever since I returned. Though at first several of the students were not sure about studying the Bible, by the end of the week we had developed a relationship that allowed free and open discussion about the claims of Christ and the authenticity of the Bible. In addition to the small group time every morning, we also taught English classes for 2-1/2 hours each morning. In the afternoon, we hosted workshops and games that allowed our small groups to bond. Each evening, we put on programs that challenged the students to think about how they have always thought of God, purpose in life, and other major issues.

I could go on and on telling about the trip, but I wanted to tell you specifically about my friend Ivan. He was one of the guys in my small group who I developed an extra special relationship with. He and I had several discussions about what Christianity is all about, and he has always rejected the idea that God exists. Throughout the week, I was able to share my testimony with him. He is now open to the idea that God exists, and he accepted the Bible that I gave him. He has prayed and asked God to help him to understand, and I continue to pray that God will reveal Himself to Ivan in a personal way. He signed up for a small group Bible study that starts next month, and the college leader from the Romanian church is following up with Ivan. I am so thankful for my relationship with Ivan, and for being able to experience all that God did while we were gone. I cannot wait to go back next year, and I want to thank you so much for making this trip happen. You definitely helped many Romanian college students take a next step in their relationship with Jesus Christ. You ought to prayerfully consider whether it is your turn to go next year and see for yourself all that God is doing around the world.

Sincerely,

John Smith
1234 Jackson Ave
Gahanna, OH 43230
614-123-4567

Financial Issues

Payment schedule: Each team member is responsible for turning in his funds to the team treasurer according to the payment schedule. The scheduling of team member payments is important because the team leader and the Missions Department will be responsible for making payments on behalf of the team during the course of the preparation period. The payment schedule is designed to have the funds on hand as they are needed.

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Accountability for contributions: We have a responsibility to process contribution checks as soon as possible. Each team member will be responsible for having any contribution checks to hand in at their regular meetings. If you will have to miss a team meeting, it is important that you make sure your team treasurer gets the checks from you. Please have the team leader contact the staff accountant with fund questions – rather than having 100 people call in every day asking for their account balances we are asking team members to funnel questions regarding funds through the team leaders.

- **Your responsibility:** Every team member is responsible for keeping track of who gave what and the amount. You will be the only one responsible for knowing that Mr. Jones gave \$75 towards your trip.
- **Team treasurer:** The team treasurer will collect money from each person, and keep track of how much was collected from each team member. He/she will turn in the money to the New Life bookkeeper at the church office.
- **Accounting staff:** The New Life bookkeeper will keep track of how much money is given for each team.

Important Notes Regarding Funds:

Our church (and our accountant) takes our tax exempt status very seriously and seeks to be in compliance with IRS regulations for non-profits. Designated gifts are specifically regulated by the IRS and they allow churches the ability to designate funds for a specific mission trip project. Notice this is not for a specific person, but for a **specific project**. Hence, though funds are sent in your name, they must be used as requested, meaning funds collected for Uganda, let's say, need to be spent for a Uganda project only. If you collect funds for Uganda then cannot go on the trip for whatever reason, you may hold the funds for one year for another Uganda trip, but you could NOT use those funds to go to France or China. Funds can be transferred between team members on the same team, same project, same location if, for instance, a team member raises support in excess of the cost of the trip.

Donated funds are NON-REFUNDABLE and overages can be either saved in an account for the next year or donated to a project in that particular country or ministry. It is VERY hard to understand that "your" funds, per the IRS, cease to be "yours" once donated to a non-profit. Once these funds are donated, they are subject to IRS regulations which we need to adhere to. We will try to keep you well aware of the rules and regulations so you know where your money is going! We cannot collect funds without a specific mission trip within the year – "banking of funds" is just not something that we have the ability to accommodate. We DO suggest you open a savings account or otherwise keep a "mission account" going all the time so you are READY TO GO when God calls!

In addition, we MUST have your funds in your New Life account to purchase plane tickets or make any non-refundable reservations. We cannot "float" tickets for reimbursement nor absorb costs incurred if you choose to drop out of a trip for any reason. If you leave a team

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once airline tickets have been purchased, there is no way to transfer that ticket or refund your money – you now own a plane ticket that can be used within a year but you will most likely have to pay a substantial fee to change your dates or locations. Please be VERY sure you can go on a trip before tying up large amounts of cash – the church cannot afford to pay for these losses and I am sure you don't relish the idea of throwing away a thousand dollars either!

The 10% New Life donation is applied to your account as the LAST piece of your fundraising. While it would be GREAT to count on that money to buy your tickets or boost your initial deposit, we have found if we apply it early then you drop off the team, the church has lost that 10% of your trip fee and we need to ask you to reimburse us, which is always a sticky issue. We just avoid those problems by depositing that at the end. For example, if you are a card-carrying church member 😊 and your trip costs \$3000, you can earn \$2700 and consider yourself DONE – we can then apply that last \$300 to your account.

Lastly, please pay attention to team deadlines. Often what you don't see are the funds that need to be sent overseas, money that needs sent to a third-party, money that needs to be sent by specific dates, check requests that need to be cut so that money can be mailed out as needed, etc. Your meeting your deadlines helps us meet our deadlines- again, there is no magic pile of money to take care of our shortages. Mission trips are entirely self-supporting and team-funded.

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How to Prepare Your Testimony

Your testimony is your story about how God has been real in your life or what He has done in your life. Your testimony is very powerful because no one can refute it- it is your life and your story. It is also personal, and those listening to you will likely identify with your situation. As you think through preparing your testimony, pray that God will show you what to say and how to say it.

Your testimony does not necessarily need to be how you came to know Christ as your Savior (though it can be). It can just be how God showed His power in your life. It is important to think through your testimony and practice before you go so that you are comfortable with it and have thought through some of the main points. It is important to go through this process even if you are not sure you will have the opportunity to use it; I have often found that God has brought opportunities for me to use what I have already prepared in very unexpected ways. Paul tells Timothy in II Tim. 4:1-2 to "be ready in season and out of season."

Writing your testimony: You will probably primarily be sharing your testimony in a one-on-one environment, but you never know when you will be asked to share in a large environment. You should be prepared for both scenarios. As with any speech, the first thing that you should ask is "who is my target audience?" Picture in your mind who you are primarily going to speak with. Ask questions and find out how they think. Don't make the mistake of thinking that your audience is uneducated or cannot understand you.

The second thing that you should ask is "when I am finished speaking, what is the ONE principle or ONE point I want my audience to come away with? From your opening statement to your conclusion, you should be building a case for your main point. This is difficult to do, but it can be done with practice and constructive criticism from family and friends.

As you begin to think through your testimony, ask yourself, "How has my personal relationship with Jesus Christ made a difference in my life?" Your story should be very personal. I don't know all that God has done in your life because your story is not like mine at all! This makes your story special, and God may provide you with the opportunity to share your unique story with someone who will identify with it in a special and unique way! Prayerfully think through how God has touched your life and begin to write down the significant events surrounding your story. Make sure to include the relevant details of the story while limiting your testimony to a reasonable time. It is best to have a 5-minute version of your testimony.

Many people have tried to cookie-cut how to write a good testimony and I used to suggest a formula for doing it. However, the more testimonies that I have heard, the more I am convinced that there is power in the uniqueness of each story. The more personal you can make it and the more of your heart you put into your testimony, the better you will connect with the heart of the person or group you are presenting it to. The God of the universe has

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been working in your life for many years, and He is perfectly capable of helping you to communicate it. You will also get information on how to use the resources at www.storystop.com. This website is designed to help people capture their unique story onto paper. It also contains many stories as examples from people like you that you can gain ideas from. Through your preparation process and as you go on your project, I hope that you will have the chance of preparing and sharing your unique story to the glory of your Heavenly Father.

Helpful hints for communicating cross-culturally: As you write your testimony, try to eliminate any illustrations or stories that would not communicate well cross-culturally. Talking about your car, satellite dish, entertainment system, big house, or swimming pool will communicate that you are far wealthier than most of them could ever dream of. You should communicate God's faithfulness and His universal principles without leaving your audience thinking that America is rich and great and the solution to all of their problems.

When you speak, be conversational and don't use Christian expressions. Your concept of "Christian" is not the concept that comes into the minds of the people where you are going! Most people view Christianity in terms of where they were born rather than something they believe. In fact, you are probably going to a place where either everyone will consider themselves as "Christians" OR their concept of Christianity includes the people who committed atrocities on their people in the name of "Christianity." Assume your audience does not have any concept of sin, faith, redemption, "accepting Jesus into your heart," or grace. This is why we emphasize a personal relationship with Jesus Christ in all that we do.

Be realistic and clear. Don't give the impression that everything used to be horrible and Jesus made all your troubles disappear. And don't speak negatively about another individual or group (especially denominations).

Speaking Through an Interpreter

Remember that your interpreter probably doesn't speak English as well as you think he does!

- Speak slowly and simply; stop between phrases and do not use slang (including spiritual lingo).
- Maintain eye contact with the listener or audience, and speak directly to them. Avoid looking at or talking to the interpreter, and never say to your interpreter, "Tell him..."
- Debrief with your interpreter after a presentation or conversation and help him to feel a part of what you are doing.
- Pray for your interpreter and look for ways to disciple him.

Chapter 2: Ministry Preparation

Your Trip Journal

As you go through the whole mission project process, God will probably teach you many things that you may not learn otherwise. I strongly encourage you to keep a record of how God works through this process. This will be a record of God's faithfulness; years from now when the details are sketchy, you can look back and remember how God was real in your life on this trip. You should start beforehand and put down what God is teaching you as you prepare for the trip. You can also write down specific *prayer* requests and record how God answers prayer.

While I am on trips, I try to journal every day. It is incredible to look back to my first trip and see what God was doing in my life. It really is not hard to take fifteen minutes each night of the trip to be alone and write down the events, feelings, and emotions of the day that stick out in your mind. This will also help you to process what you are experiencing.

I can only encourage you in this area, but I can assure you that you will never regret making the effort to journal.

Chapter 3: Cross-Cultural Issues

One of the most important aspects of preparation for the short-term project is to become students - about ourselves about the host culture - and about re-entry into our home environments. If this is your first trip, you will come back changed. Hopefully, you will not be able to look at the world as you did in the past. You will become a World Christian. You will see the world, and your life at home, from God's perspective.

The goal for this study and preparation of the host culture is:

- To help team members understand their own culture, the host culture, and major differences of each.
- To help the team members lay aside their agendas and prejudices to allow God to work through them.
- To allow the team members to study and prepare in this area by conducting their own research and sharing it with the other team members. Research assignments will be made in the team meetings. Research can be accomplished by using the church, the Internet, missionaries, former team members, and foreign nationals living in your area.

Culture

Culture impacts us more than we realize. We filter our world view through a grid and a big piece of that grid is our American, Westernized, Judeo-Christian culture. Most of the countries we will be going to have a much different grid. Until we encounter people from other cultures, we may never realize how many of our basic assumptions, categories, attitudes and customs are not shared by other human beings!

Cultures are like accents. You can recognize a Southern accent right away and it sounds funny and strange to us from Ohio; everyone here sounds fine, and we recognize that they just have trouble pronouncing a lot of their words. However, if you travel down South, you are the one who sounds different and no matter how often you tell them that "y'all" is not a word, they will probably not change the way they have been talking their whole life. Culture is the same way. Sometimes we think that if they could just do things the way we do it, their lives would be so much better. This thinking is usually wrong and trying to change the culture can be detrimental to our mission. Try to understand the culture and learn why things are a certain way.

Chapter 3: Cross-Cultural Issues

Important Definitions and Concepts in Cross-Cultural Ministry

People Group/ "all nations" - ethno/linguistic divisions based on language barriers, tribal barriers, conflict barriers, continent barriers, war barriers, cultural barriers

Ethnic - Pertaining to a body of values, attitudes, customs and behaviors peculiar to a specific people group.

Race - Pertaining to the most general of genetically transmitted physical characteristics. Race could rightly be seen as a sub-category within ethnic. In most missions literature racism is dealt with under ethnocentrism. The distinction would be that "race" is a more static definition, while "ethnic" is a bit more fluid.

Culture - Pertaining to a larger body of values, attitudes, customs and behaviors shared by one or more people groups most often in common geographical area and influenced by that geographical area.

Sub-Culture - Pertaining to the body of values, attitudes, customs and behaviors shared by people groups within a larger cultural context, often developed in reaction to that larger cultural context.

Socialization - The influence of a body of values, attitudes, customs, behaviors and experiences on a human being by a larger social collective.

Prejudice - The bias attitudes of an individual influenced largely by the socialization of that individual. Those cultural pre-judgments that create bias and conflict.

Racism - The systematic perpetration (through power) to perpetuation of societal inequities based on the "race" of human being. The preferential or prejudicial treatment of one based solely on race or ethnicity.

Sacralization - The conscious (or subconscious) imposing of sacred value to an idea, concept or value of a particular ethnic, racial or cultural group in ways that serve the vested interests of that group. The normalization of behaviors or attitudes as sacred apart from their basis in Scripture.

- Look for similarities rather than differences
- Build on the strengths of a group rather than weaknesses
- Deal with your cultural and personal biases rather than ignore them
- Determine ways that you need to change to best minister to others

Culture shock - Culture shock is your body's reaction to being in a completely unfamiliar environment. Culture shock will probably happen to you to one degree or another. Nothing can prepare you for sleeping in strange surroundings, eating strange food, not being able to

Chapter 3: Cross-Cultural Issues

communicate, using public transportation, not being able to drink tap water, and finding out that toilet paper doesn't get flushed down the toilet. Culture shock usually has several phases:

- **New and exciting phase:** Life is an adventure and everything is wonderful. The people are so wonderful and caring, the scenery is beautiful, the food is interesting, and the architecture is unique.
- **Everything is awful phase:** Little things start to annoy or anger you. Your body is wearing down from lack of sleep and unfamiliar surroundings. You may get lonely or want to go home. You may frequently become frustrated at your lack of ability to communicate. All of these symptoms will be exaggerated if you get sick.
- **The familiar and confident phase:** As you get familiar to the culture, customs, and way of life, you begin to feel secure with the new culture. Your self-confidence returns and you get into a daily routine. Eventually, you may begin to feel more comfortable in the new culture than you do in your own.

It is important to understand that in most cases, you will never leave the first phase in the two weeks or less that you are gone. When this happens, there is a tendency to think that everything in America is horrible and that we are too materialistic, selfish, and greedy while the poor yet rich in heart in the host country live a simple life filled with contentment and harmony amidst great suffering. I have heard this many times, and it is a warped view of reality. Everyone has struggles, and everyone has strengths. If you were to stay in the culture long enough, you would find that out in a hurry! Through this process, turn to our Lord and Savior and ask Him to help you to see yourself, your culture, and the nationals and their culture the way that He sees them.

Coping with Culture Shock

Coping with culture shock is not easy - because it is a psychological problem, it is important to have the right mindset. Prepare mentally beforehand, and try to:

- Be a student of the culture: Study the culture and try to understand how and why they do things the way they do. KEEP AN OPEN MIND!
- Yield your rights and expectations: Yield your right to be understood, to have customer service, to be comfortable, to be clean, etc. Be intentional about giving up expectations. Remember Christ yielded his right to be Lord of the Universe to reach out to you.
- Talk with your team: Your team members are experiencing the same feelings, emotions, and are probably having similar reactions. Encourage your team members, and work with them to mentally and emotionally process what you are going through.
- When in Rome, do as the Romans: There are really neat customs, traditions, foods, and such in every culture, so try them. Do they hold their fork differently? Do they take a siesta every afternoon? Do they play soccer? Try to participate as much as possible — you might find out why they like it so much.
- Be a servant: Remember why you are going on this trip. You are going to be a living

Chapter 3: Cross-Cultural Issues

example of Christ to a lost and dying world.

- Be FLEXIBLE: This should be permanently in your mind throughout the whole trip.

Another thing that helps to cope with culture shock is to know your own culture and to have a good understanding of your host culture before you get there. You will be discussing your host culture specifically in your team meetings. Pay close attention to issues related to:

- Religion: How does it differ from Christianity?
- Politics: What is the political system like? How long has that system been in effect? How does that differ from our government?
- History: Are there any recent changes? How do the nationals view themselves based on their history? Get a general history of the country.
- Economy: What is the economic situation of the people? What about the country? What kinds of things drive the country's economy?
- Society: How do they view the family? What are the roles of males and females in the society? What do they celebrate and how do they celebrate? What is it like to live in that country?

Tips for Overcoming Jet Lag

When you travel overseas, it often takes your body several days to adjust to the new time (including when you eat and sleep). This is jet lag, and it can affect you for several days.

Below are a few helpful tips on how to reduce the effects of jet lag:

- Keep your energy; get plenty of rest and eat as healthy as you can before your trip. Don't eat heavy or rich foods that require a lot of energy for digestion.
- Avoid dehydration; drink lots of liquids on the flight and avoid caffeine.
- Sleep on the flight (especially during the normal sleeping hours of your destination time zone). Stay awake when you arrive at your destination until it is time for bed. Naps can really cripple your body's adjustment.

Chapter 4: Logistics

Packing Tips

- Pack light! You will have to carry what you pack. Airlines are cutting back on weight limits. International flights often allow only 2 – 50 lb. checked bags and one carry-on and one personal item. Vans often have limited luggage space. Your team leader will give you the allowable luggage limits.
- Sometimes luggage is lost and/or delayed so carry one change of clothes and some toiletries with you in your carry-on luggage. Make sure you have any medication, contact lens care items, and anything else that you know needs to get to your destination in your carry-on.
- Ziploc-bag any items that may come open while traveling. You don't want to wear clothing with the fragrant smell of Pepto-Bismol or shampoo. Rolling or bagging clothes and toiletries also speeds up security checks.
- If you cannot live without something, leave it at home! You never know what can happen while traveling, so if you cannot afford for it to break or for you to lose it, don't bring it along.
- Clean out your wallet and only take necessary ID and credit/debit cards. Check with your leader about availability of using credit/debit cards where you are going. Also remember to take all credit card numbers with you separate from the cards themselves in case they are stolen.

TSA Website: Check www.tsa.gov for up-to-the-minute travel regulations, including important security requirements. We had a girl miss a flight to China –and cause everyone else a WHOLE lot of trouble- just because she carried a full-size tube of toothpaste in her carry-on. Not good.

Don't Forget

- Bible
- Camera (with batteries, media cards, charger)
- Journal/notebook
- Toiletries: shampoo, shaving items, toothbrush, etc.
- Towel and washcloth
- Rain jacket or umbrella
- Copy of passport
- Prescriptions
- Comfortable walking shoes
- Appropriate clothing items

Optional Items

- Handy wipes
- Snack foods or money for snacks

Chapter 4: Logistics

- 110v to 220v transformer– not just an adapter (go to Radio Shack); check on specifics for your destination
- Photos of family and friends to show your new friends
- Sunscreen
- Flashlight
- Mosquito repellent

Tips for Traveling Internationally

- All valuable documents and money should be in a money belt/your front pocket/ a passport pouch around your neck.
- Do not draw attention to yourself or the group in public places, especially while waiting at airports. This includes American flag logos and anything that screams “I AM AN AMERICAN” – int’l travel is not that place for that! And quiet down-we are noisy people!
- Be aware of your surroundings at all times. Keep up with your team and look out for each other while on the streets.
- Don't talk about your political opinions or say things that might be perceived as derogatory about the host country's government.
- Do not show large amounts of cash (USD or local currency). Keep a small amount separate to pay for small purchases.
- Do not over TIP. This causes problems for the missionaries and the locals. In many countries tipping is not done at all and causes great confusion!
- Do not let anyone but authorized people carry your bags. **Many locals will grab your bag and expect a fee!** Do not accept packages from anyone to carry while you travel.
- Do not make any promises to nationals that you will not keep (e.g., I will keep in touch via mail or email). As a general rule, it is best not to make any promises.
- Do not exchange money with people on the street. In some countries it is illegal to use US dollars. Most banks/vendors will want neat, tidy, unmarked US cash – they will not accept worn bills.

Medical Information: Medications should be carried on your person if at all possible. Carry only what you will need. All medication should be carried in the original container and whenever possible, carry a copy of the doctor's prescription. Prescriptions should specify the medication by its generic name; many medications are only available by the generic name overseas.

Chapter 5: After the Trip

This section is designed to help you to mentally process your thoughts and feelings as a result of going on this trip. Hopefully, when you return, you will look at the world and those around you a little bit differently than you did before you left. You will be exposed to a completely different culture, and see things that may alter the way you look at your life here in the States. That is good! You will be away from family, friends, and work, but they will not understand all that you experience, and it might be difficult to get back into your normal daily routines.

We have included this material so that you can think about all of these issues even before you leave, and have these resources so that you can use them as you return from the trip. I would encourage you to talk through these issues with your team members.

Tips on Re-Entering Life at Home

(Adapted from L. E. Chinn, International Ministries Fellowship and Darren Crutchfield, YUGO Ministries)

At this point in your trip, you have probably been away from home for an extended period of time. You may have done many new things, and God has probably shown you new things about other and about yourself. Going home is an important time in your life. How will you adjust to being home now that you have seen and learned what you have?

There are some common issues that surface time and time again in returning short-term workers. Some of these things are not necessarily good or bad, but how you handle them can be beneficial or destructive in your life. These are issues that you may or may not face individually, but at one time or another everyone in your team will face them. Whether you face each of these or not, you should strive to be sensitive to other members of your team who might be struggling with them.

Fatigue and Depression: These have been linked together because they often appear together. *Emotionally*, you may have been on a "high" since a few days before you left. But often, if your trip is more than a few days in length, you have experienced some dramatic mood swings. *Physically*, you probably have been pushing yourself beyond your normal limits. You don't normally get up this early, work this long, eat the foods you have been eating, or stay up as late as you have been. *Spiritually*, you have probably been stretched and challenged more in the past few days than in the past two years! To sum it all up, your emotions need a break, your body needs a break, and your spirit needs some time to sort out everything you have been learning. After a few days at home if you are feeling more tired than normal, or are feeling a little depressed about life in general, it is OK. That is normal. The best thing to do is get some rest and talk out your feelings with someone who will let you say whatever is on your mind and won't judge you for it. If after two or three days you are still feeling this way, contact another team member or leader and talk with them. Often, they can be more sensitive and helpful than someone who did not share your experience.

Culture Shock: Culture shock is generally defined as difficulty coping with stress in an environment that is foreign to the individual. This is commonly associated with going to another country, but it can also show up once you return home. Things about you have

Chapter 5: After the Trip

changed on this trip. For instance, your worldview has expanded, your value base may have shifted, your priorities are different, etc. You may feel a little out of place now in your "home culture" and experience culture shock again. This is a normal experience, and is actually a good thing if handled properly. You should have had some very positive changes in who you are. You need to learn new ways of living life and handling stress based on the changes you are making in your life.

Values Shock: Sometimes the "culture shock" experience is appropriately labeled "values shock." The two are very similar but different. The system of values you have just experienced on the field is far different from the one you have grown up with. Now, arriving home again, you have another value system to compare your home culture by. For some people, it is the first time they will see some of the hedonism-based value systems in our country. It can cause emotional stress or "values shock." This is not a country thing, it is a sin thing. Everybody has the same sin nature, and these problems are not only an American thing. They are just as prevalent in the other culture, and you may or may not be aware of it. The most appropriate way to handle this stress is with temperance. Don't become a "crusader" who challenges every self-seeking motive in those around you. In prayer, humbly and gratefully acknowledge that you no longer want to live your life seeking only self-comfort and pleasure, but seeking godliness and exercising self-restraint. Ask the Lord to help you make the right decisions about what is important in your life, and ask Him to give you the strength to follow through on those decisions.

Feelings of Spiritual Superiority: There is no place in the family of God for spiritual arrogance. But sometimes returnees from a mission experience can express an attitude of "well, if you knew what I know, then..." This is a dangerous mindset that tells the participant that they are somehow more "spiritually mature" than those who didn't go. A wise believer will not be critical of the spirituality of another. Realize that God is maturing and developing each of His children at different times and different places in different ways. God has used this trip to teach you new things, but while you were gone, God was using other experiences to teach them different things. Remember, "...for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure." (Philippians 2:13) Concentrate on applying the things you have learned in your own life. Your changed lifestyle will be more of a witness than if you become vocally critical of someone's spirituality.

Indifference from Family and Friends: You shouldn't expect too much from family and friends regarding your trip and the personal changes you are making. You will find some who are genuinely interested, but many will be indifferent. Believe it or not, life went on while you were gone. Everyone still got up and went to school and work. Social gatherings on Friday night or Saturday happened even though you weren't there. And, sadly, some people just won't be that interested in the details of your experiences overseas. Don't take it personally. It is best to prepare a 2 or 3 sentence summary to give those who ask, "Hey, how did it go?" After you give them your summary, if they pursue the conversation by asking questions, then you know they have a genuine interest. Your prayer partners and financial supporters will be

Chapter 5: After the Trip

your most interested people. Besides, since they have invested in your experience, you owe them a report on what their investment earned in your life and the lives of the people that you served.

Impressing/Impacting: After returning home, there are two modes of thinking people usually slip into – impressers and impacters. An illustration of these modes is in the financial world. You can deposit your money in basically two types of accounts; the long-term savings account, or the checking account. In long-term savings, your money is not very accessible, and it makes no impact on your daily standard of living. It will only come in handy some day in the future. With checking, you draw on that account whenever you need to – often several times a day.

You may deposit the lessons of this trip in an "Experience Savings Account" or an "Experience Checking Account." The person who deposits in the savings won't have much of an impact now. People may be impressed with the knowledge, but are not impacted by the life. Would you be impacted by someone who has done and seen the things you have but not let it change their life? They have not even been impacted themselves, so why should you? This person is not "drawing" from the experience. This person has a "savings" account.

The person who makes an investment in checking has a different story to tell. People will be impacted by this life. This person shares the "experience" with those around by daily "writing checks" from the "checking account" of experiences. This life has been changed by the new perspective gained on the mission field and others can't help but notice.

In the financial world, a savings account is probably wiser than a checking account. But experience and money do not work the same. The more "checks" you write against your experience account, the more the experience grows. God teaches us through many different experiences and He wants us to invest them in impacting the world around us. God is interested in us impacting the world — not impressing it. That is good to remember!

Addendum

Eight Great Questions

1. Who am I?
What can I learn about myself?
2. Who is God?
How can my understanding of God grow?
3. Who are we?
What can I learn about community and the church?
4. What is the impact of culture on faith?
How can I see life and the gospel differently because of what I've experienced?
5. What's wrong with the world?
What can I learn about justice, poverty and the causes of suffering?
6. What does it mean to be a follower of Christ?
What can I learn about discipleship?
7. What's of value?
What can I learn about my lifestyle?
8. Where am I going?
What might God call me to be and to do as a result of this experience? What can I learn about my vocation?

Addendum

Twelve Insights

1. It is not the church of God that has a mission in the world, but the God of mission who has a church in the world.
2. That which is yet to be done in the world is far less than that which has already been done.
3. People are more alike than their cultures.
4. Love is the universal language.
5. A short-term mission is a treasure hunt.
6. In cross-cultural encounters we are meeting long-lost, distant relatives.
7. God goes before you - you are catching up on a conversation that God has already begun.
8. God does not send us to be critics.
9. In the treasure hunt of grace, our encouragement and affirmation of people may be our most significant ministry.
10. Our privilege is to lift Jesus up in deed and word.
11. The quality of our love as a team and our incorporation of new team members may be our greatest witness.
12. God will not call us to do something without also giving us the resources to do it.

Addendum

10 Ways to Ruin a Mission Trip!

1. It's not about you - your warm, fuzzy feeling is the by-product, not the goal - your object is serving the people as God directs - that will often produce IN YOU unprecedented growth and dependence on God. That is awesome, but not the goal. It's the by-product! "If people are going for their own benefit, why call it missions?"
2. The leader is the leader- YOU are NOT the leader. The people that your pastors have chosen to take leadership over you in their place were not just pulled out of a hat. The leader of a mission trip team is given the authority of the pastor over that group. They were chosen because of their experience and their knowledge. In many of the cultures that we will go to in the 10/40 window, to disrespect the leader will cause them, you, the team and the national team that is sponsoring you to lose face with the very people that you are there to reach. You will put up barriers between you and the team leader, you and the team, the nationals and you, and you and God. You can and will be sent home at your own expense for this type of activity. Maybe you don't understand or agree with everything that the leader is saying or asking. That's okay. If you need to talk to the leader privately about something, they will be open to that. Never under any circumstances question the authority or decision of the team leader in a public setting. The reasons may not always be evident to you, but 99 times out of 100 there is a good reason for what they are asking for or doing.
3. Be flexible! Your trip will never go as expected. When we cold-climate people go to the hot climates to serve, our expectations can be really skewed. The name of the game is flexibility. Your national partners may have one thing scheduled for your team to do, and then the monsoons start. Guess what - people are not going to sit on the wet, muddy ground in the monsoon for an hour to hear your band or presentation, no matter how good you are. You may carry your luggage up and down 8 flights of stairs because no one seems to know the correct location – keep smiling! You are going to be asked to do things that you are not prepared to do because of communication issues between the two different cultures.
4. Come to serve, not to be served (or entertained or waited on or challenged). Yes, missions is often hard, but this is why you have sacrificed to get there. Do what is asked of you. Put yourself last; go against the basic tenets of American life - be a servant. There will be hard times, dull times, seemingly unproductive times but God will use this for your good and His glory.
5. Don't complain - we already KNOW it's hot! Watch your attitude - many things will not be like America. They will look dirty or inefficient or old-fashioned. We know it's hot. We know you're tired.
6. Leave your entitlements, rights, and expectations at the door - you're not in Kansas

Addendum

anymore. Like the early church fathers, we have the right to die for Christ. Like them, we must give up our right to comfort, good food, privacy, intimacy, free speech, nice toilets and showers. Look, what is the goal? Is it a vacation with a purpose? Go pass out tracts at Disneyworld! Your priorities must change when you arrive at the airport. You represent Christ first and foremost, then the Church, then the USA. As a representative of Christ, we must adopt the attitude of Jesus (the homeless, wandering vagabond) and the Apostle Paul. We must learn to be content in whatever condition we find ourselves. Remember that you paid for this, and you get to go home in a short time. Those that you are there to reach are staying. Also, don't expect to have all the conveniences of home. Don't offer to upgrade the national team to the latest and greatest. What you are saying with your actions is that what they have worked hard for and sacrificed to provide you with (when they don't have anything near as nice themselves) is just not good enough for you. You have insulted them and embarrassed the church and the team.

7. Leave your qualifications at the door - maybe you ARE a PhD but we need you to move manure anyway. Jesus Christ is the Eternal God who spoke in the beginning and created the heavens and the earth. Nothing was made or held together without him. (John 1) He humbled Himself, and was born as a baby. He was homeless, spent his entire adult life living among and helping the sick and poor. He was constantly in the company of the 'untouchables.' He was beaten for your iniquities. He was crucified to pay for your sins. No matter what your status in life or education, if you are a child of Christ, you have an obligation to the poor and needy. You and all of your righteousness are as filthy rags. He is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords - who are you?
8. Focus on the mission at hand - don't be absorbed with calling home ten times a day or what happens when you get home. When the 'new' wears off, it is very easy to get homesick or worried about your life at home. With international cell phones, it is easy to call home and email a lot. Don't do it! First of all, it may be against trip policy. Secondly, it removes you from the present. You don't need to make friends on your trip if you have your hometown friends on the line every day. You don't need to seek out the nationals to visit with - you get all your social needs met from your friends back home. BAD IDEA! Life CAN go on without you for a week; it allows you to focus on the trip at hand, your family will REALLY be glad to see you when you come home, and you will have made the MOST out of your trip. I was appalled in China last year when one family called home literally 2 & 3 times a day (the girl NEVER fit into the team and the family probably went home unsatisfied with their trip mainly because they never fully integrated with the team). Another team had cell phones ringing all day long - talking to mom, dad, girlfriends... RIDICULOUS! You are driving through Beijing, ignoring the rickshaws and funny signs and traffic and sights to talk to your mom about your car insurance bill? Are you kidding me?

Addendum

9. Be a happy traveler, even if it kills you. There is no such thing as a good "trip" to China, India, or Thailand. The shorter the ride, the more enjoyable it is. The food stinks, the seats stink, the passengers stink. You must remember that we represent King Jesus. Be patient and obedient to the team leader. Joy, happiness, and contentment are choices we make. Your team leader is not always going to agree with you, and you are not always going to agree with them, but the unity of the team is important. The more you complain, the more you separate yourself from the other team members, who quite honestly don't want or need you to be complaining to them. You have to make the decision to be happy. You may hate those long bus rides into the countryside of India. That's okay- remember that you cannot bring the unreachable to you. They don't care. You have to go to them.

10. Learn to be content with a little or a lot - maybe you'll get pizza, maybe you'll get cow brains- be content. Practice being content in all things. Maybe you have heard tales of the beaches in Dominica, the fruit hanging from the trees, the 25-course gourmet meals in China, visiting the Eiffel Tower - and here you are in Thailand, dodging landmines, squatting in the make-shift jungle toilet, eating boiled dog and raw cabbage. Wow! It's easy to get discouraged! I tell people to plan for NOTHING - plan for no air conditioning, no recognizable food, sleeping on the floor, plenty of bugs, primitive toilets - then everything else is a bonus. If you're planning on a 'vacation' and get substandard accommodations, you will be disappointed. Frankly, most of the world IS substandard in relation to American niceties. We are spoiled. Once you master the toilet system abroad, you will never again complain about the gas station bathroom in America- your perspective will change!

Addendum

Money! Money! Money! Raising Money for Missions!

10% NEW LIFE MEMBER DONATION – the Missions & Outreach office hands you 10% of your trip fee simply for being a New Life Church member. Much of this money comes from the Sunday morning coffee and donut sales in Bert's café!

DONATION LETTERS to family and friends – see samples in this booklet.

TEAM PROJECTS – Ethnic dinners, car washes, garage sales, etc. Run ideas past the Missions & Outreach office and go for it! We often get the contract to plant flowers at the Muirfield Gold Tournament in Dublin - this event can earn \$80 a day or more for 16 people per weekend in late May. Your team leader will contact you with the details if this becomes available.

LOCAL RESTAURANT "SPIRIT DAYS" - Partner with Damon's, City BBQ, Max & Erma's and other local restaurants to offer fundraiser days for your specific team. You print up flyers and publicize the date, and your team gets 10 – 20% of the guest totals.

HANDMADE CULTURAL ITEMS FOR SALE – Maybe your location has a specialty product, like coffee from Costa Rica or paper beads from Uganda. If you can bring them home for a good price and re-sell them to raise mission funds, DO IT!! Our people love the chance to purchase local products from craftsmen around the world and support mission teams at the same time.

A Word to the Wise

Fund-raising for YOUR trip really needs to focus on YOU, not New Life Church. For example, if you sell candy bars at school, you are selling them in the name of Tim Smith who is going on a mission trip to China this summer, not New Life Church. We are all about protecting the integrity of our church.

We would like FEW things to happen ON church property. We already ask people to tithe their income. When there is a constant barrage for money in the lobby, that can be annoying and hurts everyone. Maybe one Saturday night dinner or one giant all-team garage sale will do – not a garage sale every week or a team effort every week. Draw on your coworkers, neighbors, relatives – people who know YOU!

Addendum

Watch multi-level "parties" – we can't have a Mary Kay party and a Tupperware/Pampered Chef/CM party every week. We also can't favor one home business over another, and once you open the flood gates, you are sunk. Keep those things in your family/job/neighbor circle.

Look over the GenRev ideas: sell your extra junk on eBay, have a garage sale or sell to the resale store; market a hobby, etc. Focus on finding extra cash! I think a positively BRILLIANT idea is to offer to deliver or spread MULCH or do spring cleaning- come up with a price, call it a team effort, use it for team unity, and earn CASH!

Many ideas have been tried and just don't work for our congregation. We CANNOT have 5 teams with STUFF in the lobby, nor can we compete against each other OR against other church events. Don't book your event during VBS or another busy event. Also, no selling at FFF – though a PERFECT environment, this is a self-supporting event which needs to funnel proceeds back into the event -so no food booths, no trinkets, no water bottles – NONE!

Likewise, use good taste and common sense. As a church, we don't want to have a poker tournament or a wine-tasting party. Run ALL fund-raisers through the Missions & Outreach office. You might think a Monte Carlo Night is a good idea until Pastor Steve has a heart attack...