



THE **OUTREACH**
FOUNDATION
OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, INC.

Are you asking questions about your short-term mission trips?

We think you should.

A few questions to consider as you evaluate your congregation's short-term mission sending program:

- How is prayer integrated into our discernment, participant selection, team preparation, sending, on-the-ground ministry, reentry and reintegration?
- Do our funding strategies for trips divert mission dollars from our existing commitments, or do they expand our congregation's overall investment in mission?
- Does a focus on our own "participation" divert our attention from other important Kingdom work, such as the support of long-term missionaries and frontier mission?
- What expectations do we have of trip participants? How do we express these expectations and engage participants in fulfilling them?
- How are we equipping the participants to recognize and respect differences of culture and custom?
- How are we helping them to learn about the history and context of the church partner beside whom we will serve?
- Are we going primarily as doers or learners? Are we as willing to receive as we are to give? How will we listen?
- How can this trip deepen our own congregation's learning from the faith and faithfulness of Christians in contexts other than our own?
- Are we relating to those whom we will visit as friends? As partners? As objects of our largesse? As a project? As brothers and sisters?
- How is this trip part of a vision and strategy for building long-term, cross-cultural relationships?
- Are we doing for others what they can do for themselves?

- Are we connecting with the church in the place where we will travel? If there is a PC(USA) partner there, how will we learn from their understanding of how God is at work in their context? Can we yield to their vision for ministry and mission?
- How will our presence and how we behave build up the body of Christ in that place for God's mission?
- Are we building relationships that respect the dignity of others? Or are we so focused on our own experience that we engage in one-way mission that is demeaning to others?
- Are our chief contacts on the field acting as individuals, or are they working with others in their own context in ways that affirm the unity of the body of Christ?
- What do we know about the other churches and partners who are sending people and resources to serve in the place where our team is going? How do we find out about them?
- Are we working collaboratively to bridge barriers of language and culture, or do we expect those whom we are visiting to do all of that bridging work?
- To whom are we looking as cross-cultural coaches/counselors as we seek to discern how we can serve and share in ways that won't do harm?
- Are we naïve or in denial about how money affects relationships? Who is holding us accountable for how we use our resources?
- How are we integrating the mission team's experience into the life of our own church? How are we engaging the congregation in the relationships that we are forming?

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I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed throughout the world. For God, whom I serve with my spirit by announcing the gospel of his Son, is my witness that without ceasing I remember you always in my prayers, asking that by God's will I may somehow at last succeed in coming to you. For I am longing to see you so that I may share with you some spiritual gift to strengthen you — or rather so that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine. (Romans 1:8-12)