

GUIDELINES FOR PLANNING SHORT-TERM MISSIONS TRIP PROJECTS CANADIAN CHURCH OF GOD MINISTRIES

These guidelines were prepared by Ministry Services of the Canadian Church of God Ministries to be used when organizing or giving approval to any Missions Trip it will be involved in promoting.

1.1 Preamble:

In all likelihood the mission of the local church cannot be carried out within two blocks, two miles or two provinces. God has given us a global mission that goes from next door to the ends of the world. It therefore follows that every local congregation should not only plan for but actively be involved in carrying out its “next-door-to-the-ends-of-the-world-ministry!”

God’s people have always been on a mission, so serious Bible students and committed Christians will easily understand the importance of being on a “next-door-to-the-ends-of-the-world ministry!” Personal involvement in global ministries is a natural consequence of understanding and following God’s will.

The local congregation can be active in carrying its worldwide ministry in many ways:

- Praying regularly, even daily for those whose ministries are next door and in distant places.
- Providing financial support for those being sent through the coordinated efforts of the Offshore Missions Division of Ministry Services of the Canadian Church of God Ministries.
- Providing materials, equipment and resources to help those who serve in distant places.
- Participating in specific developmental and ongoing programs.

2.1 Objective:

To plan and provide for the opportunity for people in local churches to be involved in a Missions Trip Project. Many local congregations have an enlarged vision of opportunities for global ministries because people they know and worship with every Sunday are telling the exciting stories first hand. Missions Trip Projects may take many forms:

- The mission may be evangelistic in nature.
- A musical mission may include a choir and special singing groups to conduct or help conduct services and at the same time become more acquainted with the global nature of our mission.
- Medical mission teams may go to care for physical needs.
- Construction projects are probably the most appealing and most often used a way for lay people to be involved. Participants returning home often feel they left something of their love and work behind in the form of a building.
- Combinations of several modes of ministry are often used in ten to fourteen day mission trips.

It is essential for the host country to suggest or affirm the kind of ministry that is best at any given time to help them carry out **their** mission.

3.0 Benefit:

Pastors, laypersons and congregations become personally involved in a next door to the ends of the world ministry. The church will begin to feel that they are carrying out the teaching of our Lord sending us to the ends of the earth.

Involvement in different countries and mission fields allows people to be exposed, not only to different cultures and scenery, but also to a variety of opportunities for ministry in mission.

However, a word of caution: It is not good to leave half-completed buildings all over the world. We should fit into a plan that is going to be finished by someone else or go back and finish what we started.

4.1 Early Planning is Essential

- Pray and think clearly about the reasons for sponsoring or participating in a Missions Trip.
- Build this thought into early planning sessions with participants: over and over again missionaries and nationals say that while the construction is important, the Christian fellowship shared with the people is even more important.
- Appoint a Missions Trip Coordinator who will be responsible for overseeing the entire project.
- Talk with the home or global mission leaders and others who can help you discover a worthy project in a place where they are able to host your group.
- Begin organizing the trip 9 – 12 months in advance.
- Clear your trip with:
 - the Offshore Missions Director of the Church of God in Western Canada
 - the missionary and national leaders in the country where you are going
 - the host pastor and congregation (to be clear as to the intent of the trip, the approval should be an approved motion in the Board or Mission Committee's minutes)
 - determine if clearance is needed with Global Missions – Anderson
- Determine the size group necessary for the project in conjunction with the number the host national leader/missionary feels can be adequately cared for. Be sure to convey the composition of your group in terms of women, men, couples and youth, as well as the particular construction or ministry skills of the people in your group.
- Communicate often by mail, email, or phone with the national leader or missionary.
- It is important to check for travel advisories about necessary health, political or terrorist precautions.
- Prepare and circulate a schedule of group meetings, language classes, payment schedule and deadlines for receiving applications, information sheets, visa forms, pictures, and passports.

5.1 Financial Planning

- Develop a total budget for the trip before attempting to determine the cost/person. This should include the amount for working materials and all the expenses related to those going on the trip. It is advisable to have the building expenses which the church will contribute kept separate from the individual expenses.
- An appointed treasurer can help pay bills, keep receipts, and prepare a report upon returning home.

- Require a significant deposit with the application within a couple of weeks of the first informational meeting. It helps determine those who are seriously interested.
- Set up and announce early a payment schedule for applicants.
- Let every participant pay something of his/her own fare. It is not good for people to go without making a personal investment. If the trip is out of the country and a staff pastor is required to lead the trip, that entire fare could be paid because of the work/responsibility involved. Paying the full fare for lay leaders is also a possibility, but could result in some rivalry for trip leadership to obtain a 'free trip'.
- It is advisable to send some money in advance to pay for the materials that you want to be on the work site when you arrive. In most cases these funds can be sent through the regional Executive Offices. Receipts should account for the expenditures.
- Discuss with the host pastor or missionary the current exchange rate and what difficulties might be encountered in exchanging money or travelers checks. (Never exchange money with an individual you do not know in an airport, public building or on the street. It may be illegal to do so.) A money belt is advisable.

6.1 RAISING FUNDS FOR A MISSION/WORK CAMP PROJECT

The Offshore Missions Director, the Missions Trip Coordinator and individuals involved in the project may promote and encourage others to financially support the project. The following guidelines should be followed:

- Persons giving to the project should direct their support to the Executive Offices of the Church of God in Western Canada designated for the Missions Trip Project. It may be designated to meet the expenses of the projects to be carried out at the site, or, to assist in paying the expenses of the group going on the project.
- **Designated Gift Policy:**
“Designated donations will be honoured if the donation is accepted by our charity. If a project is oversubscribed we will attempt to contact the donor about recommended use of these funds. If no contact can be made, the charity will have the right to use these funds as they see fit.

Donations of \$10.00 or more will receive a receipt for income tax purposes if a mailing address has been provided.”

7.1 MISSIONS TRIP PROJECT EXPENSES & CANADA REVENUE AGENCY (CRA)

If a Missions Trip is planned for outside of Canada, careful consideration must be given to meeting the requirements that charitable organizations have with the CRA (Canada Revenue Agency). Note the following:

- If money is to be spent on projects while the Missions Trip group is in another country, an agreement must be prepared which notes how the funds and project are going to be used. The Missions Trip Coordinator, who is responsible for how the funds are spent, must sign the agreement. A report must be prepared at the end of the Missions Trip by the Coordinator describing specifically how the funds were spent. This report must be

submitted to the local church and/or the Offshore Missions Director. (Be sure to keep a journal of the trip, events and those expenses not issued receipts for.)

- Persons going on the Missions Trip may submit their bills for travel expenses (airline tickets, accommodations, and meals) to the Executive Office for approval. In some cases, where some portions of the trip expenses, such as airline tickets are purchased to get group rates the participants should make their cheques out to the Church of God in Western Canada and submit them to the Missions Trip Coordinator. (Official Receipts for income tax purposes will be given for the above mentioned expenses.)
- Funds sent in to the Missions Trip Coordinator or Executive Office from non-participants designated for Missions Trip Project may be receipted for income tax purposes if the funds are not designated for a particular person.

8.1 TRAVEL ARRANGMENTS

- Secure from the internet, airline companies and travel agencies information about the country that you expect to visit. While those going should not be doing so just to take a trip, information about the country adds great color and excitement and helps your group understand cultural differences.
- If you are traveling by air, investigate several airlines to get the best schedule and prices.
- Pre-plan for lodging, food and bus service.
- Information about the areas where you are going should be shared with the group to acquaint them with the geographical, political, weather, and church conditions.

9.1 SCHEDULES ARE IMPORTANT TO THOSE GOING AND THOSE STAYING

- An agenda with as much information about the daily schedule as possible should be printed and shared with the group, with the understanding that changes are inevitable.
- Be sure the hosts know the number of days you plan to work, and if you are planning side trips that will involve them in planning or participation. Unless they have a missionary budget to cover such travel expenses, they should travel at the group's expense. They should be reimbursed for expenses spent in connection with arranging for your trip.

10.1 PERSONAL INFORMATION

- An application form must be filled out by those wishing to go, stating their reasons for wanting to make such a trip
- An information sheet must be secured from each participant listing skills, age, weight, health problems, doctor's name, and any medications taken regularly. (Have prescription medications in original containers.)
- Prepare list of names and passport numbers that may be given to hotel clerks and airline ticketed personnel to save time and facilitate matters. If you include the locator code from the airline tickets on this list you will save a great deal of time at check-ins.
- Prepare a list of names and phone numbers of family members who are not going on the trip so they may easily pass information from one to another as people call home or in the event of an emergency.
- Set deadline for receiving:
 - Applications
 - Personal information sheets
 - Payments

- Passports, etc.

11.1 CONSTRUCTION

- If at all possible secure a set of plans
- Appoint a construction coordinator
- Inquire about tools needed for the task, what tools they have, and which ones you might need to take with you.
- Unless there is some serious structural reason for not following the suggestions of the local people in the construction of their building, do it their way.
- In the event that women and youth are going, and it is strongly advised, be sure that your hosts understand that they have come to work. If there is a problem with their participation in construction work, painting, etc., it should be known before you get there.

12.1 THE TRIP SHOULD BE MORE THAN A CONSTRUCTION PROJECT

- Communicate clearly about their plans for worship services, preaching teaching and musical expectations.
- Be sure that your host knows the intention of your group. Are you coming as tourists; a witnessing, evangelistic, teaching, or medical team; to construct a building; or a combination of several things?
- Daily devotions and group times are important. Leadership for the worship portion may be assigned to different members. In hot climates, where work may begin very early in the morning and extend until late in the day, a two or three hour break for lunch and devotional time is good. During the devotional time, both nationals and visitors should be encouraged to share. You may need a separate “North American time” for just your group to be together to consider personal needs, and update of the schedule, discuss personal and construction items that need to be purchased, and clear up any misunderstandings.
- If possible, have some basic language studies and learn to sing a few songs in the language of the host country. If you group can form a choir, plan some songs in English that can be sung with a spirit that communicates, even in a strange language. Lifeless singing inspires no one!

13.1 MEDICAL

- It is important to arrange for insurance will in advance of departure date. It is best if one person arranges insurance for everyone through one carrier.
- In case of emergency overseas be sure to have access numbers for a Medical Assistance Company.
- Medical Emergency Plan Checklist
 - Identify emergency contacts
 - Medical Assistance Company
 - Pan emergency communication methods
 - Provide for transport
 - Identify likely evacuation destinations
 - Communicate and update plan for others
- It is desirable to have a nurse or a person trained in First Aid in your group, particularly if you are going into a remote area.

- It is wise to take a medical bag for basic first-aid necessities.
- Check on necessary medical precautions with the health department. Sometimes local authorities suggest more than is necessary.
- Check with your local doctor about his/her suggestions for precautions against or treatment of dysentery. Simple dysentery caused by impure water is generally a 2-day event. Anything more than that should be checked by a doctor in the country of your visit to avoid dehydration.

14.1 EATING CAN BE A TREAT OR REQUIRE A TREATMENT

- Depending on what part of the world you are visiting, care should be exercised with regard to your diet. There are 2 reasons: 1) that you don't humiliate your hosts by refusing to eat what they have offered or what is purchased in a restaurant, and 1) that you do not eat food that potentially may cause illness, delays, and inconveniences.
- Anything cooked or peeled, provided it has not been washed in contaminated water, is safe. In most parts of the world it is safest not to eat fresh salads or raw vegetables.
- With few exceptions, only water boiled 5 – 10 minutes and allowed to cool in a covered container, water treated with a purifying chemical, or bottled water should be drunk.
- Coffee and tea are not guaranteed safe unless made from water, which has been properly prepared or mineral water.
- Water on airlines, particularly non-Canadian/US airlines, is generally not considered safe. Even though they may have most recently filled their tanks with water at a NA city the previous water could have been from any other city or country.
- Coca Cola and other national brands of soft drinks are considered safe anywhere in the world because of higher standards for water filtration used in their manufacture.
- Bottle or canned pure fruit juices containing no water are usually safe.
- Be sure to take along a bed net, jells for sunscreen, bug repellent, lice shampoo, flashlight, etc.

15.1 LUGGAGE

- Use matching brightly colored adhesive marking labels on each piece of luggage or box. It will help you identify your luggage more quickly and will help other people not to mistakenly take yours. Do not leave the luggage areas until all luggage has been counted. Never leave luggage unattended in a public area. It may be stolen or considered a bomb threat.
- Attach a separate nametag to each piece of luggage.
- Each piece of luggage should have the owner's name and home address as well as a dated flight schedule inside. For security reasons, the home address should not be on the outside until the trip home.
- It is often helpful to have one to three persons serve as luggage checkers.

16.1 MISCELLANEOUS

- The church should participate in a dedication service for the workers before you leave and a report-back session the first Sunday home. A DVD presentation can follow in a couple of weeks.

- Informational phone contacts with the home congregation(s) should be pre-arranged.
- A numbering system for your group of 12 – 25 persons can be very helpful so that each time you board a bus you simply count off. (If you make enough side trips, you will probably leave someone behind if you don't.)
- No one should leave the work site or hotel without the knowledge of the trip coordinator. There are certain risks involved. The greatest hazard in travel is not food, illness, or gunmen, but auto or bus accidents. If people randomly leave for shopping expeditions, the commitment to work and sense of being a group will soon be gone.
- Appropriate time should be planned for shopping so people may see something of the local color, buy things to take home, and sense the culture.
- When possible, it is good to plan a couple days of recreation and relaxation in a major city or tourist attraction. Sometimes this can be in the same country, or by preplanning, a free stopover can be arranged at no extra cost in another country.
- You might wish to invest in a special money-changing calculator before going to assist when making purchases, etc.
- A mixture of traveler's cheques and cash may be preferable when going to a country where exchanging a traveler's cheque is either nearly impossible or quite cumbersome. Usually one gets a better exchange for cash. Visa and MasterCard are useable in many countries. American Express is not always accepted in some countries.

A word of caution is that you not take too many things for granted and ignore necessary planning. Planning for any kind of a group activity is a major responsibility and what seems like a simple venture could turn out to be a mild or major disaster.