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# WELCOME

Dear future short term missionary,

Congratulations! You have stepped into an adventure following after the heart of God: to bring hope and good news of great joy (Luke 2:10) to those who don't yet know Him. One day, we will worship Jesus together with people from every tribe and tongue (Revelation 7:9), and we have the privilege of partnering with the Holy Spirit in the fulfillment of this vision. I love what John Piper has to say about missions and worship:

*Missions is not the ultimate goal of the Church. Worship is. Missions exists because worship doesn't. Worship is ultimate, not missions, because God is ultimate, not man. When this age is over, and the countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God, missions will be no more. It is a temporary necessity. But worship abides forever.*

*Worship, therefore, is the fuel and goal of missions. It's the goal of missions because in missions we simply aim to bring the nations into the white hot enjoyment of God's glory. The goal of missions is the gladness of the peoples in the greatness of God. "The Lord reigns; let the earth rejoice; let the many coastlands be glad!" (Psalm 97:1). "Let the peoples praise thee, O God; let all the peoples praise thee! Let the nations be glad and sing for joy!" (Psalm 67:3-4).*

*But worship is also the fuel of missions. Passion for God in worship precedes the offer of God in preaching. You can't commend what you don't cherish. Missionaries will never call out, "Let the nations be glad!" who cannot say from the heart, "I rejoice in the Lord ... I will be glad and exult in thee, I will sing praise to thy name, O Most High" (Psalm 104:34, 9:2). Missions begins and ends in worship.*

- John Piper, *Let the Nations be Glad!*

As we lift up the name of Jesus, God will change and grow us, too. In the chapters that follow, you and your team will learn Biblical foundations and practical skills to be effective on the mission field. Each chapter begins with a memory verse and ends with a few tasks to complete before your next meeting, followed by examples or prompts to help you apply what you've learned. In the middle, you'll find Bible-based teaching that will guide your team throughout your preparation process. (Turn to the next page to get started, and continue on to read Chapter 1 before your first team meeting!)

My prayer is that God would grow each of us into more passionate, continually maturing followers of Jesus through this adventure together, and that He would use our unity and sacrifice to bring His hope to people all over the world. If there is anything I can do to help you along this process, please feel free to contact me at 443-837-3709 or [michele.rollins@bayareacc.org](mailto:michele.rollins@bayareacc.org).

*From here to the nations,*

Shawn Hart  
Bay Area Short Term Missions



## Why do we go?

Bay Area participates in short term missions as one way of obeying Jesus' command to "make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19), often called the Great Commission, and fulfilling Bay Area's mission to make passionate, maturing followers of Jesus from here to the nations. Specifically, we want to make disciples through evangelism, nurturing believers, and developing leaders while planting the church where it does not exist and serving where it does. The goal is a win-win-win situation: for you, the "goer"; for Bay Area, the sending church; and for our partners in the United States and around the world. Here's what a "win" looks like:

### For the short term missionary:

- Take the next step in your walk with Jesus and learn to walk in closer dependence on God
- Identify and/or develop Christian character and gifts through training and on-field experience
- Grow in prayerfulness, including prayer for the nations and missions
- Gain an understanding of the overwhelming need to reach the lost
- Gain an understanding of missionary life
- Gain an understanding of opportunities for service in missions

### For the sending church:

- Equip short term missions participants for (greater) service in the local church and local community
- Develop an understanding of local church involvement on a global level and more fully fulfill the Great Commission
- Develop a growing heart for the lost among the congregation of the local church

### For the host missionary or global partner:

- Strengthen the effectiveness of their ministry through practical service
- Encourage the host missionary/partner through testimonies, songs, sermons, personal conversations, etc.
- Come alongside host missionaries/partners in evangelism, thus mobilizing the believer in reaching their own people

*What does a "win" look like for you on this short term missions journey?*

*Write your answers below. You will refer back to them after your trip to see how God worked.*

## How do we go?

The vision of Short Term Missions Teams at Bay Area can be summed up in one sentence:

### **We live as a family, sent with a story so that all might encounter Jesus.**

Ultimately, our goal is that people all over the world - from our families to our neighbors to the nations - would **encounter Jesus** in a real and compelling way so that they might respond to Him. The pressure's off - we aren't responsible for how people respond to Jesus. We simply serve so that they might have a clear understanding of who He is, what He did and how they might come to know Him personally.

**Family, sent and story** are the three key words that help us think practically about what this means for us. Let's unpack those together:

#### Family:

- We believe that we're **better together**. We believe we are most effective when everyone operates in their gifts (1 Corinthians 12) and willingly chooses to "outdo one another in showing honor" (Romans 12:10).
- We all want to grow in maturity and love for Jesus. Just as physical maturity happens within the structure and support of a family, our spiritual family helps encourage us, correct us, and point us to Jesus so that we can grow strong and healthy.
- We are committed to our team and to our global partners. Our global partners are an extension of our church family, and we see them as dear and respected partners in ministry.

#### Sent:

- We believe we are **sent to serve**, following the example of Jesus (Mark 10:45).
- We seek opportunities to sacrifice so that others might see and hear the gospel. That means we are willing and even eager to be uncomfortable if it gives other people the opportunity to hear the gospel because we are so excited about Jesus and thankful for what He's done for us.
- We are learners of culture and people, taking a posture of humility that gives the Holy Spirit freedom to work in and through us. We understand that we don't have all the answers and we are willing to learn something new from the people that we serve.

#### Story:

- We believe we are **part of a bigger story** and that others need to hear about Jesus (Romans 10:9-15). We have had the opportunity to hear the gospel and respond to Jesus through the grace of God and the witness of others, and we want to share that same opportunity with people around the world.
- We choose to renew our minds through spiritual disciplines to stay refreshed and engaged in the story God is weaving. God wove rest, prayer, the Word and other rhythms into our lives as a good gift.
- We desire to finish well, moving toward greater love for and obedience to Jesus. It's all about Him and His great love for us.

# ONE - SENT ONES

**Memory Verse:** **John 20:21** Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.”

## Sent Ones

At some point along your journey of short term missions, someone - a friend, neighbor, colleague, family member or stranger in the grocery store line - will ask you: why? You may have many reasons for embarking on this adventure, or you may be uncertain exactly how to answer that question. In either case, if you are a follower of Jesus, one thing is true about you: you are a sent one, in a long lineage of sent ones.

Throughout history we see God sending people - He sends Abraham to a “land that I will show you” (Genesis 12:1); He sends Moses to Pharaoh to bring Israel out of slavery (Exodus 3:10); He sends Gideon to save Israel from the enemy Midianites (Judges 6:14). God doesn’t stop there. He sends Esther to the king’s house to save the Jewish people from certain death (Esther 4:14); he sends Jonah to the Ninevites to bring about repentance (Jonah 3); He sends John the Baptist to tell of the coming Messiah (John 1:6). Then, at just the right time, God sends Jesus, His own Son, “to give His life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45). Now, Jesus sends us - to our neighbors and to people across the country or across the world.

*Read our memory verse, John 20:21. Under whose authority and example are you sent? How does that shape your view of being a Sent One?*

## The Crucial Role of Senders

First and foremost, we are sent by Jesus. But we are also sent by others! Senders, also called a Support Team, are people committed to joining you in this ministry through prayer, financial support and encouragement. No one can stand alone; we need the Body of Christ as we serve both in our own neighborhoods and in a different culture. Paul talks about the Body of Christ in 1 Corinthians 12:21:

*The eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.”*

Your eye and your hand each fill vital, but different, roles in the function of your body. In the same way, there are no goers without senders, and there are no senders without goers. Both are crucial to God’s global purpose, and at different times in your life you may play different roles! We’ll return to 1 Corinthians 12 in the next chapter, but for now, let’s talk about two different types of senders - we’ll call them **Prayers** and **Payers**. People may fulfill both roles, but each of us needs some of both along our journey.

**Prayers** are warriors, encouragers and truth-tellers. These followers of Jesus know that we don’t step out onto the mission field on our own strength - and they know that the enemy would love to see us distracted, anxious or sick. As you share your missions journey with them, Prayers partner with you in praying for your travel, your team, the people you will serve and your own spiritual and physical health. They may encourage you in a low point with God’s faithful promises or point you back to the truth of the Bible when you’re unsure how to proceed. Prayers help move the unseen, intangible

and supernatural side of your trip. Consider updating your Prayers regularly with prayer requests and ways they can serve - though their role is different than yours, it is just as vital to God's mission!

**Payers** are stewards, equippers and givers. They may or may not be followers of Jesus, but they all play a role in others following Jesus through your ministry. Family, friends, missional community members, business associates and many others can join your support team in this role. For the believers, this is an opportunity to be a part of what God is doing in West Virginia, Ghana or Poland. For those in your circles who don't know Jesus, this is an opportunity to support you, and it's an opportunity for you to share a little bit of how God is at work in your own life. The most common way for people to be Payers is to give financially, but others may donate resources such as clothing or books or offer their talents in cooking, fitness or networking, depending on the needs of your team.

In the next two sections, we'll talk some more about Payers and how you can invite them to partner with you and your short term missions team.

## **Raising Support: What does the Bible say?**

The beginning of any Biblical discussion of resources must be that God owns it all. Time, abilities, money - each of them is given to us by the Creator who made the sea and the dry land (Psalm 95:5). Scripture is replete with passages about this truth (Leviticus 25:23, Deuteronomy 10:14, Psalm 24:1, Job 41:11, Haggai 2:8 are just a few examples). If God is the owner, then we are stewards or managers, entrusted to care for resources and to invest them in a way that reflects the priorities and desires of the Owner (Matthew 25:14-30, Luke 19:11-27).

With that framework, we turn our attention to support for ministry work. We need to have a clear understanding of what the Bible says about having a support team. If you are embarrassed by the thought of asking for support and do not understand the Biblical basis, you will not properly challenge people to join you in the work you are doing for the Lord, and you will miss out on the chance to grow in your walk with Jesus as you rely on God to provide. It is critical that you take the time to search the Scriptures.

Read the following verses and answer the following questions to gain a better understanding of what the Bible has to say.

*From where will my support come? (Read Philippians 4:19, 1 Chronicles 29:12-14, Mark 12:41-44)*

God is the Source. God is the source of all you have and the One you entrust with all you give. Biblical giving is always to God, not to an individual or church. And the reverse is also true. Biblical receiving is always from God and not from an individual. Even though people want to support your ministry personally, they must know that their giving is as unto the Lord. Thus, their giving is a response to their faithfulness to Him and not just their individual concern for you or your ministry.

As you look to individuals and churches for support, you must keep in mind that the Lord is the prompter of those who give and pray. Therefore, you must pray for God to call those He desires to support you.



*Is my ministry worthy of support? (Read 2 Corinthians 5:20, Matthew 10:10, Galatians 6:6, Philipppians 4:10-20, 1 Corinthians 9:3-14, 1 Timothy 5:18)*

Pray for God to call those He desires to support you!

The ministry and the minister are worthy of support. You are valuable in the sight of God. God provided for your salvation and provides for your every need. As people called by the Lord to certain tasks, we can be sure He will provide for our personal needs and ministry needs. Consistently throughout Scripture, God provided for His servants' earthly needs through the gifts and offerings of His children. If God leads you to missionary life, then you can be confident that He will provide.

*Will support raising be easy? (Read Ephesians 6:10-12.)*

Fundraising, like missionary service, is a spiritual battle. Satan will try to discourage you in the process. He will cause you to think of yourself as a beggar or not worthy of support. Remember, the easiest way for Satan to keep us from a cross-cultural ministry is to discourage us before we even leave home.

*Should people be challenged to give of their finances? (Read Galatians 6:6, Matthew 6:19-21, 2 Corinthians 8:7)*

The need to give to missionary service is greater than your need to receive. God could provide for you in a number of different ways to accomplish His will. By giving, believers are able to be involved in the advancement of God's Kingdom and they are able to exercise dependence on the Lord in their finances.

It is critical to challenge people to give. Be honest and straightforward in this challenge. Just as you need to be challenged spiritually, others do too (Hebrews 10:24). Do not be afraid to challenge people to pray for you, your ministry, and the world. Also, as people are challenged to be involved, you too will be spurred on in your faith.

Should I ask directly for financial support? (Read Romans 15:24, Luke 11:9-10, Nehemiah 2:5, Philemon 8-10)

There is nothing in Scripture that prohibits asking directly for financial support. It is true that there are a number of men and women in the history of missions who did not ask directly for support. Their reasons were based on personal conviction, not on explicit Biblical principles. Paul directly tells the Romans in Romans 15:24 that he hopes to have them “assist” him on his journey to Spain. Paul’s motivation in Philippians 4:14-20 for having people involved in his ministry is for their blessing! In the same way that investing in a business can result in financial rewards, investing in your ministry can result in eternal rewards. Your challenges will allow others to experience God’s blessing.

It is important to be open about finances. Most people would much rather hear what your needs are and how they can be involved than to have you “hint” about giving. It is important to present your financial needs clearly, directly and honestly, without being pushy. Let the Lord speak to them about joining your support team.

## Raising Support: Where do I start?

1. **PRAY.** Prayer plays a vital role in the process of Support Discovery. Even though it is through God’s people that you receive the support, remember that it is the Holy Spirit who leads people to be involved. Here are some things for which you should be praying:
  - *Pray for God’s direction in making your list of potential support team members.*
  - *Pray for the Holy Spirit to guide people as they consider committing themselves to praying, giving and helping.*
  - *Pray for people to be open and obedient to God’s leading.*
  - *Pray for boldness as you share your needs.*
  - *Pray for wisdom and clarity as you share your ministry.*
2. **List Potential Support Team Members.** Pray about who should be on the list. Ask God for ideas. Include your relatives, home church, friends from school and/or work, other churches you have a relationship with, neighbors and anyone else that might have an interest. Pray about how and when you can best share your needs with them. In thinking about financial sources, you may want to use some of your own savings or earnings (Matthew 6:21), but refrain from funding your trip completely on your own - you will miss out on an opportunity to trust God’s provision and others will miss out on an opportunity to support God’s ministry with your team. Be creative!
3. **Send a Support Letter/Update Letter.** You will want and need to write a letter to invite people to join you in this ministry through prayer and financial giving. Check out the following pages for examples and guidelines. You can also meet with people in person to share about your upcoming opportunity.
4. **Send a Thank-You Letter.** Let your Senders know how much you value them! Make sure to send a thank-you note or letter after you return. Here are some things you might include:
  - *Share what you learned or how you grew. Share photos, if possible.*
  - *Thank your supporters for their faithful part in your ministry.*
  - *List prayer requests for those whom you served and yourself.*

You and your team may also choose to conduct fundraisers or hold other events to invite people to join your Support Team.

*How are you feeling about the support raising process? Excited, anxious, unsure, confident? Take a moment to share your thoughts below.*

*What are your expectations, hopes or fears for this short term missions journey? Share them below, and consider sharing these with your team at your first meeting.*

**Complete before your first meeting:**

1. Memorize John 20:21 and come prepared to share it with your team.
2. Write a draft of your support letter. (We've provided a few examples in the following pages. You can find more, as well as the Bay Area policy on STM giving, on your team's Managed Missions page.)
3. Log into Managed Missions and create your Public Profile. (If you and a family member will be raising support together, only one person needs to create a profile.)



# HELLO FRIENDS AND FAMILY!

By Tristan Teltoe - April, 2017

## HERE'S HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT IS IN THIS MISSION TRIP:

### By check:

1. Fill out a check payable to:  
BACC

### Online:

1. Go to  
[bayareacc.org/stmgive](http://bayareacc.org/stmgive)

## ONE MORE YEAR OF ADVENTURES

This past year has been a year full of fun and excitement. My main achievement was that I got my hunting license! I got to go hunting with my dad a few times, which was very fun. This year I plan on going hunting more times, and I also plan on going on my second mission trip. I love going on mission trips because I like helping others and making their lives better.

In June, I will be going with a team from Bay Area Community Church to Bluefield, VA. This time I'm bringing my mom with me! In this town, many families can't afford summer programs for their children during the week so that the parents can work. So, we are partnering with the Wade Center to provide care for about 75 children for a week. We will have educational activities, games, crafts, and snacks for these children. We will also share a message of hope, encouragement, and of God's love. In order for me and my mom to be able to go and contribute to this event we have to raise \$1,500. Would you be willing to help us?



Thank you for your help! If you wish, we can send you an update when we get back with the events of this trip! Your help can change lives!

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*“And I heard the voice of the Lord saying,  
‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?’  
Then I said, ‘Here I am! Send me.’” – Isaiah 6:8*

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# LIVING ON MISSION

## Hello Friends and Family!

We miss seeing many of you regularly. I want to update/remind you on how God has changed our lives over the last months, , and years. Here's a quick snapshot:

- Summer 2012, Trevin worked in Ghana for 6 weeks and proposed to Clancy upon returning, and she said yes!
- Fall 2012, Trevin got a part time job at Bay Area Community Church as the Global Outreach Administrative Assistant
- Spring 2013, Clancy graduated with her nursing degree from Howard Community College and Trevin's position went full time
- **August 16, 2013, Trevin & Clancy got married!**
- Fall 2013, Trevin & Clancy moved to the Annapolis area to be closer to their church
- Winter 2014, Clancy got a job serving at a restaurant in Annapolis called Red Red Wine Bar (she served Kevin Spacey last month)
- Spring 2014, Trevin started a new position at Bay Area as the Local Outreach Coordinator

The most notable change is (obviously) our marriage. **We absolutely love each other and enjoy officially being on the same "team."** Our combined investment in Bay Area has brought us joy, new friends, and a sense of purpose in Annapolis. My new role as the Local Outreach Coordinator involves connecting the 1500-or-so people from Bay Area with the 20 local organizations that the church supports. People want to serve Annapolis in tangible ways and I help them do that. While I'm busy in the church world, Clancy is busy loving on her coworkers and customers in downtown Annapolis. She is making a great impact on people's lives there, but a job in the nursing field is not far off for her. **We really feel like we are "living on mission" right now.** Below, we're with a group of people who are living on mission with us: our missional community. Our MC, as we call it, has become our closest friend group here because we are all focused on the same mission: to mature in our faith in Christ and see others come to know Him.



# Building a Lasting Missional Lifestyle

"Living on mission" can sound both catchy and confusing. What I mean by that is we, as Christians, want to build a lifestyle that is in line with God's desires. **God's desire, or mission, is "to make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:18).** Our missional community is focused on this mission, spurring each other on every week.



To encourage us to continue focusing on God's desires in our daily lives, we invited a missionary couple from Poland, Tomek & Damaris Otremba, to spend a night with our group in February. They shared their heart, vision, and ministry with us, and we shared ours with them. It was an inspiring night, to say the least!

Clancy and I really connected with the Otremba's. We took them into DC one day and spent time asking them about their ministry. **By the end of the morning, we felt a strong urge from God to lead a group of people from Annapolis to Poland to serve their ministry.**

# Empowering Missional Community in Poland

Once we decided to lead a team, the rest happened so quickly! Bay Area had a huge push to get people to go on trips overseas, and after a short few weeks, we had a team of 9 people. And we sealed the dates: traveling to **Cieszyn, Poland July 20 to 30.**

The Otremba's ministry focuses on creating and investing in missional communities. They found that small groups of intentional relationships have a great impact on the people and culture of Poland. Like us, they meet weekly with a group of people and spend time loving God, each other, and their community. We will join them in their daily routine and help bolster what they do in Cieszyn, Poland.

Each day we will walk through the town and saturate it with God's most powerful tool: **prayer.** Then we will participate in **service projects** at the local school and neighborhood, giving a necessary hand to beautify their community. After school lets out, we will host family/children's **games**, allowing for the Otremba's to connect with more families. At the end of most days, we will invite people to join us for a Polish **cook out**, engaging them in conversation.

**We need your help to be successful in Poland. Please consider praying for us daily.** I've included a prayer card for your convenience. Fill out the response card, too, so I can keep you updated! You can send it in the included envelope, if you feel led to support us financially, look at the process on the right. **Clancy and I must raise \$5,000 to lead this missions trip.** As you know, all donations are tax deductible and are essential to making this mission possible. Please send financial support by May '19. Thank you for your relentless love for Clancy and I! We are always amazed by it.



## Financially Support Our Mission:

The best way you can be successful is by check. Please write the check payable to RACCC with "Poland 2014" or "Travis & Clancy" in the memo line. You can use the included envelope to send it in. You'll also get an online, follow these easy steps:



## Sample Support Letter 3

April 2016



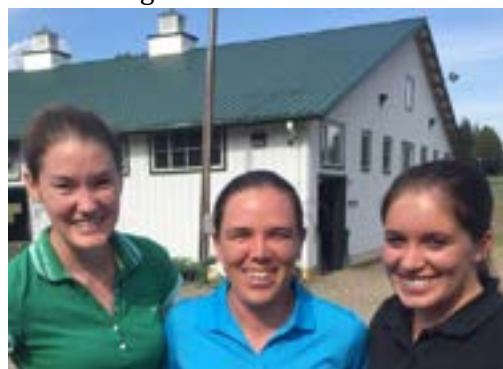
Hi friends & family,

For the second year in a row, the Christmas season has passed by without an update from me, but I'm getting around to it in the springtime! This has been quite an exciting year for me – making new friends, journeying to new places, starting new jobs (two of them!) and a new adventure coming up this summer that I'll share more about. First – let's catch up!

Last June, I had the incredible opportunity to go to Ghana on a team from Bay Area Community Church (BACC) to hang out with high school students. We sang, talked, laughed, and prayed with them. Our team of 7 - ranging from age 16 to 50+ - got to share the good news that Jesus died for our sins so that we could really LIVE with over six thousand (!) high school students during our ten-day trip. I loved every minute - thank you so much to those of you who supported me last year!

Once we arrived back in Maryland, I jumped into the final weeks of preparation for my Therapeutic Riding Instructor certification, which took place during the first weekend in August. It was the culmination of about a year of studying and student teaching, and on August 2<sup>nd</sup>, I became an instructor along with friends Kylie and Nichole (pictured to the right). Four days later, I joined Maryland Therapeutic Riding as a member of the barn staff and an instructor. (That's job #1.)

The rest of my year has been an amalgamation of work, visiting friends and family, and serving at BACC. I'm in my 2<sup>nd</sup> year of leading a group of middle school girls and last fall I also joined an amazing community of young women who gather regularly to share life and learn to follow Jesus together. Just this month, I accepted a position working at BACC to support global missions, and I could not be more thrilled to begin work there soon! (That's job #2.)



The opportunity and desire to work in global missions started out of our trip to Ghana last year, and I am so honored **to lead a team back there this summer!** I love the Ghanaian people and look forward to continuing to build relationships with the dedicated people at Scripture Union Ghana, the organization that we partner with. We'll travel to Ghana for ten days, June 2<sup>nd</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>, interacting with students and sharing hope, joy, and encouragement with them. Each member of our team will have the chance to share their own story, to teach from the Bible, and to meet with students in small groups.

**Our trip is less than 8 weeks away!** As someone important to me, I would love for you to be a part of our support team, serving the youth of Ghana. There are two ways that you can join in:

- 1) **Give financially.** I have to raise **\$3,300**, and the majority is needed by **April 21<sup>st</sup>**! Check out the instructions enclosed to give online or by check!
- 2) **Pray.** Please e-mail me to join & see enclosed for how you can pray!

I could not do this without you and I am SO THANKFUL for you and your role in my life!!



Let's catch up! | EMAIL | PHONE

## GIVE ONLINE

- Go to: [www.bayareacc.org/stmgive](http://www.bayareacc.org/stmgive)

## GIVE BY CHECK

- Make payable to "Bay Area Community Church" or "BACC"

- Mail to:  
**Bay Area Community Church**  
**Finance Office**  
**884 Chesterfield Rd.**  
**Annapolis, MD 21401**

## JOIN OUR PRAYER TEAM!

- Email [email here] to be added to the list
- Commit to praying weekly in April, May, & June, & daily from June 2<sup>nd</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>

## FOR GHANA

- Pray that God would be working in the students' hearts even before we arrive.
- Pray that Scripture Union would be encouraged and strengthened and the gospel would be advanced throughout Ghana
- Pray for national leadership
- Pray for peace



## FOR OUR TEAM

- Pray for us individually: Michele, Chris, Greg, Gloria, Dave, Gavin, Sally, Danny
- Pray for our preparation & time before we leave, including USNA graduation/commissioning for 3 of our team members!
- Pray for the necessary approvals for overseas travel
- Pray for unity, authenticity, & humility, and community
- Pray for boldness & clarity

## TWO - BUILDING A TEAM OF DISCIPLES

**Memory Verse:** **Philippians 2:5-7** In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

### Profile of a Disciple

If our purpose is to fulfill the Great Commission to “make disciples of all nations,” we must learn what a disciple is and how we can be disciples. In fact, the definition of a disciple is a learner. As always, we turn to Jesus to instruct us. When Jesus calls His disciples at the beginning of His earthly ministry, this is what He says:

*Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. - Matthew 4:19*

This short sentence tells us a lot about a disciple. First - a disciple is someone who **follows Jesus**. Discipleship is not based on going to church, praying regularly, or even reading the Bible, although a disciple likely does all of those things. A disciple is someone who follows Jesus as Lord, comes under His authority, and looks to Him for direction. Second - a disciple **is changed by Jesus**. Notice that Jesus says “I will make you” - following Jesus always requires a Spirit-inspired change as we receive from Him and respond to Him. Finally - a disciple **is on mission with Jesus**, fulfilling the Great Commission by sharing the good news about Jesus with others.

**To recap:** A disciple of Jesus is a person who follows Jesus, is changed by Jesus, and is on mission with Jesus. This profile statement is clarified in the following biblical characteristics of those who are receiving and responding to the gospel of Jesus. In other words - what does a passionate, maturing follower of Jesus look like?

#### A disciple **receives** daily by:

*Meditating on the Scriptures (Joshua 1:8, John 8:31-32)*  
*Walking in the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18, Galatians 5:16)*  
*Persevering in prayer (Matthew 6:9-13, Luke 11:9-10)*  
*Connecting in community (Hebrews 10:24-25, 1 Corinthians 12:12-13)*

#### A disciple **responds** daily by:

*Loving God back (Matthew 22:37, 1 John 4:9-10)*  
*Loving other believers (John 13:34-35)*  
*Loving the lost (Matthew 22:39, Acts 1:8)*  
*Making disciples of a few (Matthew 28:18-20, 2 Timothy 2:2)*

During your short term missions journey, you and your team will practice each of these characteristics of receiving and responding together. In the next section, we'll talk more about loving other believers, and specifically how you and your team can grow together over the next several months.

*Think about the profile of a disciple. Which characteristics are strengths for you? In which areas might Jesus be calling you to grow through this short term missions experience?*

## Who Am I & Who Are We? (Personalities, Spiritual Gifts and Teams)

Underneath our overarching identities as followers of Jesus, God has gifted each of us with unique personalities and spiritual gifts to be used to further His kingdom and His mission around the world. God delights in unity and diversity - we see it in the different roles but equal worth of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and we see it in our communities, including short term missions teams! Ultimately, God put your short term missions team together and He has perfectly selected each member to bring their own personality, testimony, gifts and struggles into the team. Are you an extrovert? You have an important role to play. Are you an introvert? You have an important role to play. Good with details? A master at sharing vision? Have the gift of evangelism, hospitality, service or mercy? You have an important role to play. Your team, and the people you will serve, needs each member to thrive and carry out God's mission together.

In the last chapter, we began to look at 1 Corinthians 12. Let's turn our attention back there:

*Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-26. What is Paul trying to teach us about teams?*

God desires that each member of the body has "the same care for one another" (v. 25) and that we would both suffer and rejoice together (v. 26). That's a high calling as a team. It's also important for us to consider this chapter in context. The last verse ends with this phrase:

*And I will show you a still more excellent way. - 1 Corinthians 12:31*

You've probably heard what comes next - some people call it the "love chapter." Paul's point is that no matter how gifted we are, no matter how perfectly (or imperfectly) our team works together, love is the cohesive agent that holds us all together. Have the gift of faith, but not love? Sacrifice all your worldly possessions, but lack love? Paul says that person gains nothing. But love "bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things" (1 Corinthians 13:7). Our call is to be that kind of person, to be that kind of team.

## Team Building

If we want to be a team that reflects Jesus, what does that mean? What are the traits of a team player? We'll use the acronym "**TEAMWORK FACTOR**" to help us get practical about our teamwork.

### Teachable.

A teachable spirit creates a non-competitive environment in which learning and sharing come naturally. Teachability gives all members of the team the freedom to make mistakes as they learn, and it fights against our ego or pride in what we already know or have experienced.

### Encouraging.

Encouraging words enhance the development of a community and spur on the whole team. You can grow in encouragement by intentionally looking for and calling out others' gifts and strengths.

**Appreciative.**

How can you grow in gratitude for those who are different from you? Consider ways you can show your appreciation for team members before, during and after your trip.

**Motivated.**

Team players take initiative to prepare and to serve others. We want to “do all things as unto the Lord” (Colossians 3:17, 23)

**Willing.**

Team members may have different levels of strength, skill and health, but each should be willing to work to the best of his or her capabilities. Willingness also includes accepting uncomfortable conditions in the host country. Willingly take on the heat, food, bugs and germs for the sake of the gospel.

**Open.**

Be open with what you are learning, experiencing, feeling, thinking, etc. Express both the positive and negative. Your vulnerability with others builds community and trust.

**Refreshing.**

Serving in an unfamiliar place can be hard. You may experience heat or sickness or feel exhausted or emotionally drained. It's good to have others around to help you press on or be able to rest! Think about how you could refresh others on the team throughout your journey.

**Kindred Spirit.**

Build a sense of camaraderie as you pursue Jesus and His mission together. There's something about unique shared experiences that helps us persevere in challenging times.

**Flexible.**

We have a saying around here for missions: “Flexibility is a must!” Things will change from day to day both before and during your time on the field. A flexible team member will learn to accept the unexpected as the norm.

**Agreeable.**

Living together in close quarters, sharing bathroom facilities and every other aspect of group travel requires everyone to be gracious. “Outdo one another in showing honor.” (Romans 12:10)

**Cooperative.**

You're all in this together! Work together to overcome or deal with issues that arise; share with one another and go out of the way to help out your teammates.

**Thoughtful.**

What can you do to make a teammate's day a little easier or brighter? How can you think of others' experience instead of just your own?

**Obedient.**

There will be times when the team leader has to make unpopular decisions. A team player will respect the leader's authority and encourage others to do the same.

**Relational.**

Get to know the others on your team. Go out of your way to learn about their hopes, their dreams and their history. The better you know each other, the better you can reflect a God who knows each of us intimately and desires relationship with all of us.

*Which of these characteristics come naturally to you? Which might be more challenging? Are there any that you are surprised by or disagree with?*

Our tendency toward independence and pride means each of us has to be intentional about putting others before ourselves. Thankfully, we have the example of Jesus found in our memory verse this week. We'll read the whole section to get some context.

*Read Philippians 2:1-11. How might humility and mission be related?*

Paul points back to the worship of Jesus. If you remember the words of John Piper from the beginning of our journey, "missions begins and ends in worship." We want to keep this perspective in mind as we work hard at ministry - that glorifying God is our ultimate purpose.

Being part of a team isn't always easy, but it's worth it! God will do great things through His unified church, and through the unified teams that He sends on mission together.

## **Team Covenant**

When you visit another country, state or city, you are representing Bay Area and the United States, but most of all, you are representing the Lord. In order to be above reproach in our attitudes and behavior, Bay Area requires each team to write and sign a team covenant governing standards of conduct you will adhere to while on the field. Your team will write the covenant together during your next team meeting - topics you consider should include your overall purpose and ministry objective, discussions of politics and doctrine, team unity, accountability, interpersonal relationships (relationships with the opposite sex, interacting with nationals, conflict resolution), time, flexibility and dress. Take time to review the sample covenant on the next page prior to your team meeting.

## **Complete before your next meeting:**

1. Memorize Philippians 2:3-4 and come prepared to share it with your team.
2. Do you know your personality type and your spiritual gifts? Take a moment now to discover them, and come prepared to share your results with your team. (You can find links to personality and spiritual gifts assessments on your Managed Missions page.)
3. Review and sign Bay Area policies found on the team's Managed Missions page.
4. If applicable (Ghana, India, South Sudan, Uganda), complete the required visa form (detailed instructions can be found in Managed Missions).

## **Complete during your next meeting:**

1. Create and sign Team Covenant.

# TEAM COVENANT

**Team Name:**

(e.g., Poland, Belize 2, Ghana 3)

**Overall Purpose:**

To bring honor to the Lord through our work and to share the gospel with boldness.

**Politics:**

Team members will refrain from discussion of politics and will only respond in generalizations and in a positive manner.

**Doctrine:**

Team members will support the Doctrinal Statement of our church and will be prepared to share our doctrine in a loving and understanding way.

**Credibility to the Task:**

Our task is to provide assistance in the construction of the church, to provide medical and dental care, and to help in church outreach through evangelism.

**Unity of the Team:**

“Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.” Col. 3:12-14

**Accountability:**

Each member will set aside time daily for private time with the Lord.

**Interpersonal Relationships:**

If any problem arises between team members, we commit to praying about it first, and if necessary, speaking privately and personally to that member in a loving, Christ-like way to resolve the issue. If it cannot be resolved between the two, then we commit to going to the team leader.

**Relationships with Nationals:**

We will use good judgment regarding initiating physical contact with nationals in public and in private.

**Team Leadership:**

As an ambassador of the Lord, the United States, and Bay Area Community Church, I will strive to be above reproach in my actions and attitudes. I will respect and submit to the authority of the team leader.

**Time:**

We commit as team members to be as punctual as possible to all scheduled team and host events unless excused by the team leader.

**Flexibility:**

By not merely looking out for our own interest, but also for the interest of others (Philippians 2:4), each team member will be flexible at all times about unexpected changes in schedule and/or events.

**Dress:**

We are committed to being culturally relevant in our dress while in country.

**BAY AREA COMMUNITY CHURCH SHORT TERM MISSIONS POLICIES**

*Please include this statement at the end of your team covenant. When you sign your team covenant, you are agreeing to abide by the following statement:*

- As a short-term missionary participating on a short-term mission trip, I am reminded that I am an ambassador of the Lord Jesus Christ. As I serve, I not only represent Him but also my home country and my church. This is a tremendous responsibility. Consequently, I will strive to be above reproach in my actions and attitudes.
- I will submit to the team leader's authority.
- I will submit to Bay Area's authority.
- I will refrain from a dating relationship with a national or team member while on this trip, especially being sensitive to working with interpreters of the opposite sex.
- I will refrain from abusive language, drinking alcoholic beverages (except on the recommendation of the local missionary), taking illegal narcotics, smoking, etc.
- Due to the political instability and anti-American sentiment in various countries around the world, I will refrain from expressing any political opinions while overseas.
- If at any time while on the field my behavior constitutes a problem, Bay Area reserves the right and authority to return me home. Any additional costs incurred as a result of this action will be at my expense.

---

Team Member Signature

---

Date



# THREE - YOUR STORY ... HIS STORY

## Memory Verses (two this week!):

**1 Peter 3:15** In your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect.

**Romans 6:23** For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

## Your Story

Imagine you are sitting at a coffee shop with a friend, classmate or colleague when they turn to you and say, “It’s easy for you to be happy - you’ve never had anything bad happen to you in your life.” Or maybe the person next to you on the airplane sees your Bible or devotional in your lap. “My parents used to go to church, but I don’t really understand this whole Jesus thing,” they say. “Why is religion such a big deal to you?”

In the New Testament, Peter charges us to “always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have” (1 Peter 3:15). Whether you think your story is boring, exciting, predictable or surprising, your personal story of how Jesus Christ pursued you, offered you eternal life, and continues to enrich your life today is one of the most effective tools you have for sharing your faith. Your story is your own, and it’s hard to discount someone’s personal experience. That’s why John wrote “we proclaim to you what we have seen and heard” (1 John 1:3). The words he shared weren’t random or anonymous; because he had been there, his words and story held extra weight and value to his listeners.

When the Apostle Paul stood before King Agrippa (Acts 26) he spoke simply, logically and clearly about his life before salvation, how he met Christ, and what his life was like after conversion. Paul’s testimony takes three or four minutes to read aloud in a conversational manner. In the first half of this chapter, we will use Paul’s story as a guide to prepare our own stories to share. Then, in the second half, we’ll take a close look at the gospel and consider how our stories can help us share the good news about Jesus with others.

*Why is knowing Jesus good news to you?*

## How to Prepare Your Testimony

Like Paul, our hope is to share our personal testimony in a simple, logical and clear way. That means that we must take time to understand our own story and prepare to communicate it well. By following the steps outlined in the next few pages, you will learn how to tell others about how you came to know Christ. The words that you choose, the flow of your story, and a strong beginning and ending will help you tell your story effectively.

Testimonies can be prepared on many subjects and tailored to various audiences. The kind of testimony outlined here is designed to be shared with a non-Christian. It will be best suited for sharing one-on-one or in a small group.

The purpose of preparing a testimony is not to memorize it and give it verbatim, but to help you put into words some of the important and interesting details of your conversion. A testimony serves primarily as a door opener, not a convincing tool. Even if people are not ready to be convinced that they need Jesus, they can often be open to talk about the Gospel after hearing a personal testimony.

## Before, How and After

Paul's testimony in Acts 26 is a Biblical model you can follow in writing your own personal testimony. Paul's format in Acts 26 is:

Lead-In	Verses 2-3
Before	Verses 4-11
How	Verses 12-20
After	Verses 21-23
Close	Verses 24-29

Let's look at each section of your testimony:

### Before:

Many people's actions spring out of their unsatisfied deep inner needs. These "holes in our hearts" are meant to be filled by Jesus. What were one or two of your unsatisfied deep inner needs before you came to know Jesus Christ? (Examples: lack of peace, fear of death, no meaning to life, loneliness, lack of purpose, lack of significance)

Non-Christians often try to satisfy their deep inner needs through unsatisfactory solutions. In the past, what unsatisfactory solutions did you use to attempt to meet those deep inner needs? As you develop your testimony, list positive as well as negative solutions you may have tried. (Examples: marriage/family, work, drugs/alcohol, money, hobbies/entertainment, bad relationships)

If you made a decision to follow Jesus at an early age and have continued to grow, your "before" section may be short or simple. That's okay! Consider what you understood about Jesus before your conversion and any spiritual foundation your parents may have laid for you.

### How:

Describe the circumstances that caused you to consider Christ as the solution to your deep inner needs. Identify the events that led to your conversion. In some cases this may have taken place over a period of time.

State specifically the steps you took to begin following Jesus. If there is a particular passage of Scripture that applies here, you may want to paraphrase or state it.

Include the gospel clearly and briefly. Be sure to include 1) all have sinned, 2) sin's penalty, 3) Christ paid the penalty, 4) each person must make a decision to follow Jesus.

### After:

Share how Christ filled or is filling your deep inner needs. In the "before" section, you expressed your needs and how you tried unsuccessfully to meet them. You now want to briefly show the difference that Christ has made in your life.

Conclude with a statement that centers on the gospel. Here's one example: "But the greatest benefit is that I know for certain that I have eternal life." The person you talk to will tend to comment on the last thing you say. Often it is natural to move from the testimony into a clear presentation of the gospel.

## Write Out Your Testimony

The Testimony Worksheet (at the end of this section) provides questions that will help you get started in writing out your testimony. Spend some time to jot down thoughts for each question on a separate piece of paper. This will give you a basis from which to write sentences and paragraphs about your own experience.

As you write your first draft, refer again to the testimony format above. Make sure you include each key point and think through how you will transition between each point. In addition, follow these guidelines:

- 1. Make it conversational.** Avoid literary sounding statements. Use informal language. You are sharing your own story, not presenting a report or persuasive argument.
- 2. Share about what happened to you; don't preach about what should happen to them.** Say "I" and "me," not "you." This helps keep the testimony warm and personal.
- 3. Avoid religious words, phrases and jargon.** Don't assume the listener knows what you mean by terms such as sin, accepted Christ, or even Christian. Consider how you might explain those ideas.
- 4. Generalize so more people can identify with your story.** Don't name specific churches, denominations or groups. Avoid using dates and ages.
- 5. Include some humor and human interest.** When a person smiles or laughs, it reduces tension. Humor is disarming and increases attention.
- 6. One or two word pictures increase interest.** Don't just say, "Bill shared the gospel with me." You might briefly describe the setting so a person listening will identify more readily.
- 7. Explain how Christ met or is meeting your deep inner needs** but do not communicate that all your struggles and problems ended at conversion.
- 8. Sound adult, not juvenile.** Reflect an adult point of view even if you were converted at an early age.
- 9. Avoid dogmatic and mystical statements** that skeptics can question, such as, "I prayed, and God gave me a job," or "God said to me..."
- 10. Simplify - reduce "clutter."** Mention a limited number of people and use only their first or last names. Combine information when you can.
- 11. Avoid examples that do not cross cultures.** For example, do not use an example of North American football in a country that does not even know what it is.

## Practice Your Testimony

After you have written out your testimony, you may want to have another Christian read it and make suggestions for improvement. Ask them to point out any areas that you need to explain further. Be sure the Gospel is presented clearly. Then, when you have a final draft that you like, outline your testimony on a 3x5" card. Practice giving your testimony with your team - you might also share it with your missional community or life group. This will be an excellent opportunity to practice and receive feedback.

## Lead into Your Testimony

When you feel comfortable giving your testimony you may begin to wonder, "When do I share it with a non-Christian?" or "How do I direct the conversation so it will lead to presenting my testimony?" You may find the following suggestions helpful.

1. Include some “small talk” before discussing spiritual matters. Discuss family, job, hobbies, interests, etc.
2. Be alert for expressed needs such as family problems or stress on the job. You can use these to show how Jesus has helped you through some of the same areas.
3. Discuss past concerns and needs in your life. “We used to struggle in our marriage relationship,” or, “I used to allow the pressures at work to get to me. Then I discovered something that made a tremendous difference in my life.”
4. Discuss contemporary situations in the news or in your area. “I saw on TV that drugs are epidemic in our country. It seems that people are trying to find something that satisfies so they are turning to drugs. These same people are saying it does not work.”
5. Build relationships with them. It may take ten minutes or ten hours or ten days or ten months - but build relationships.
6. Don’t condemn them for living like non-Christians; they are non-Christians. Your objective is to share how they can have a better life in Christ.
7. Avoid dogmatic “religious” statements. “Jesus is the answer to all your problems.” He is, but they don’t even know who He is, much less what He can do in their lives.
8. Avoid arguments on moral issues. You can expect non-Christians to have conflicts with clear Biblical teaching. Your purpose isn’t to convert someone’s behavior today - it is to introduce them to the person of Jesus to begin a discipleship journey.

## Follow Up

When you have shared your personal testimony, you may want to conclude with a statement that causes the person to reflect on what you have just shared. What you say will depend on how this person has been responding to what you have shared. If their response seems positive you could say something like:

1. “Has anything like this ever happened to you?”
2. “Do you know for certain whether you have eternal life?”
3. “May I share with you how I know for certain that I have eternal life?”

If their response seems negative or neutral you could say something like:

1. “If you are interested I would like to share more with you sometime.”
2. “Do you have any questions on what I have just shared with you?”
3. “Well, that is my story. If you ever want to talk about it any further, I would love to do so.”

*This article is adapted from The Navigators’ 2: 7 Series, a training course in personal discipleship. For more information, write The Navigators, Church Discipleship Ministries, P.O. Box 6000, Colorado Springs, CO 80934 or phone (719) 598-1212, extension 442. Used by written permission.*

## How to Share the Gospel

Sometimes, sharing your testimony will open up the opportunity to share the gospel. In other instances, you may be asked to speak to a group or be able to respond to someone’s faith questions by sharing truth with them. There are many ways to share the gospel; however, here we will learn and practice one way using our second memory verse, Romans 6:23, as a guide.

Write out Romans 6:23 below.

We simply define the gospel as the good news that through faith in Jesus, whose death and resurrection paid our penalty for sin, we have new, eternal life.

There are three essentials to sharing:

- **Be filled with the Holy Spirit:** God's Spirit fills us when we surrender to Him, confess our sin, and step out in faith to obey whatever Jesus tells us to do (Ephesians 5:18). When we are filled with the Holy Spirit, God gives us power, boldness and wisdom to tell others about Jesus (Acts 4:31).
- **Be faithful in prayer:** The god of this world, Satan, has blinded the minds of unbelievers so they are unable to see the light of the Gospel (2 Corinthians 4:4). Our response is to faithfully pray and ask the Lord to open their eyes to the glory of Christ as we step out in faith to share the Gospel.
- **Be prepared to share:** You don't need a seminary education to tell others about Jesus. Though the Gospel is deeper than we could ever fully grasp, it is simple enough for a child to understand. Just like any other skill, sharing the Gospel requires practice. The more you practice, the better you become in communicating the greatest gift anyone could ever receive.

Bill Bright, the founder of Cru, shared the Gospel with countless people. He defined successful witnessing as **"taking the initiative in the power of the Holy Spirit to share Christ and leaving the results to God."**

So, the pressure's off. We want to be faithful to prepare, pray and listen to the Holy Spirit, but it is God who is responsible for the results - not us.

Next, log into your Managed Missions account and watch the "Share The Gospel" video available there to walk through the steps of the "modified bridge" method.

*Use the space below to practice sharing the gospel.*

## Communicating Through an Interpreter

Hopefully you will have many occasions to share your testimony while you are on your short term mission trip. In some situations, you will need to communicate through an interpreter. Whether you are sharing a three-minute testimony with someone you just met in the park or you are speaking in a formal Sunday morning church service, there are some key things you can do to ensure that your message gets communicated effectively.

1. If at all possible, meet with your interpreter and go over your testimony, sermon notes or whatever material you have before you actually try to communicate your message to your audience.
2. Speak to the audience, not the interpreter.
3. Speak loud enough to be clearly heard by your interpreter.
4. Speak slowly.
5. Think through your ideas ahead of time so you can say it in short, simple sentences.
6. Avoid using slang words or phrases that your interpreter may not understand.
7. Stop after every sentence to allow your interpreter to translate.
8. If you are talking about technical subjects and you wonder if they know what you mean, test their understanding by asking them a question or two about what you just said.
9. If your interpreter gets stuck and doesn't know the word for something you are trying to say, it's often best to move on in the conversation so as not to embarrass your interpreter. If it is an important point, come back to it later.
10. You may assist your communication with sign language, similar to playing charades.

Sharing your testimony and sharing the gospel in a way that is natural and comfortable for you takes practice, but over time you will build invaluable skills that will serve you not just on your short term missions trip but in your workplace, school or neighborhood. God has great adventures and blessings for each of us as we step out in obedience to share His name with the world around us.

### Complete before your next meeting:

1. Memorize 1 Peter 3:15 and Romans 6:23. Come prepared to share them with your team!
2. Write a draft testimony and bring it to your team meeting. You can use the worksheet on the next page to guide you.

# BUILDING YOUR TESTIMONY

If you haven't shared your testimony before or need a refresher, use the questions on this page to help you think through your story. You don't have to answer every question. Use these questions to consider the themes or ideas in your story and how you might use your own experience to encourage others to trust Jesus.

## **Before: What was life like before you trusted in Jesus?**

1. Where did you look for security before you met Jesus or gave Him control over your life? What was central to your life? (e.g., performance, control, romantic love, approval of others, money/status)
2. What did you believe about God? (e.g., He is distant; I need to earn His love; He could never accept me)
3. Are there specific life circumstances that shaped your view of God and beliefs about Jesus? (e.g., turbulent home life, receiving praise for high performance, poor choices by self or others)

## **During: How did God break into your life?**

1. When did you first hear the good news about Jesus? What was your reaction?
2. What circumstances led you to consider faith in Jesus?
3. What steps did you take to respond to the gospel?

## **After: How has knowing Jesus changed your life?**

1. How has Jesus met your needs or changed your beliefs about God (identified in the Before section)?
2. How have you continued to grow since you trusted Jesus?
3. Is there a particular Bible verse or story that is meaningful to you and may encourage others?





## FOUR - CROSSING CULTURES

**Memory Verse:** Acts 17:26-27 And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us...

Whether you are traveling to West Virginia, Southeast Asia or anywhere in between, you can be sure of one thing: you will be crossing cultures. One simple way to think of culture is “how we do things here,” and it is built on history, worldviews, economics and more. No culture is perfect, and no culture is irredeemable - as short term missionaries, we travel as learners of culture and as ambassadors of both our local culture and our God-given culture as citizens of heaven (Philippians 3:20). In this chapter, we will discuss how to deal with culture shock, consider how to be bridge-builders between cultures, learn about gift-giving, and think about the missionary lifestyle and how that can help us to be good goer-guests in the host culture we go to serve.

*Take a look at our memory verse. God has placed each of us in a lifespan, a country and a family so that we might seek Him and find Him - and that includes the people you will go to serve! How could understanding their culture help people realize that God is “actually not far from each one of us”?*

### Culture Shock

Let's start by defining **culture shock: a psychological disorientation that stems from unfamiliar cues and unmet expectations in a new culture**. In other words, culture shock happens when we step out of our comfort zone into an unfamiliar environment. One person described it this way: “It's like taking an exam 24 hours a day, or like a low-voltage buzz that irritates and builds stress throughout the day.”

It's important to note that culture shock happens to everyone. It is a natural response to a new culture, and it is only a problem if it is not anticipated and recognized. Some people are skeptical about culture shock and assume it is similar to a child experiencing homesickness at summer camp, but that's not true. Culture shock is not reserved for the weak or incapable - if you believe that, your risk of major culture shock is great! Culture shock has little to do with intelligence and a lot to do with familiarity.

But there's good news! Culture shock isn't fatal; there are many things you can do to limit the effects of culture shock and use this new experience as an opportunity to grow. The best way to prepare for culture shock is to learn. Learn about culture shock, about your host culture, and about your home culture. The more you know, the less jolted by the shock you will be.

It's important to know yourself, too. Remember, there is only one of you in this world and God has designed you this way on purpose! Consider how you deal with change and conflict, living arrangements, personal space or other potential differences. Do your best to understand yourself and to remember the people in your new culture

will be different. Different is not bad, it is just different. Do not try to make the people you meet in the new culture like you. You are a learner of the culture. It is your job to acculturate, not to change them. Spend a lot of time asking questions and learning. An attitude of a learner not only helps you become informed and adjust, but it also communicates servanthood to your host culture.

*Reflect on culture shock. If you have experienced it before, what was it like? Is there anything you would do differently? If you haven't experienced culture shock before, think about what might be most challenging for you in this area. Is there a team member or friend you could talk with to help you prepare?*

## **Dealing with Culture Shock: Being a Bridge Builder**

One of the best ways to combat culture shock is to see yourself as a bridge builder. As a short term missions team member you enter a culture quite different from your own. The behaviors, values and beliefs of the people may differ greatly from those familiar to you. With time you may come to notice the common denominators between yourself and your hosts, but it's likely the differences will hit you first. Imagine two cliffs: on one side is the North American way of life, and on the other is the way of life found in the host country. In between looms a large chasm. In order for the two cultures to meet and understand one another, a bridge must be built to connect the two sides.

Think of your upcoming journey as a learner in bridge building. You can lay the beam, erect scaffolding and forge cables that make communication between your worlds possible. Surprise your host community with your initiative at bridge building, and you will find their hands joining yours.

Building the bridge involves a number of things you can think through before going, as well as others you can work on while you are there. Unfortunately, some people go on short term trips and never work at building the bridge. They deprive themselves of some very important personal experiences, which limits their understanding and curtails their growth.

Bridge building is an exciting challenge! In fact, our hope is that you will come to appreciate the world opening up to you so much that you will continue to build bridges for the rest of your life.

## **Bridge Building Involves Examining Your Stereotypes**

All of us maintain certain stereotypes about other people. Some are based on elements of truth. Others grow out of myths or false perceptions. It is unfair to judge or evaluate a person based on stereotypes about the group to which he or she belongs. God created each individual to be uniquely different, and they should be treated as such.

Building the bridge begins with examining stereotypes: the ones you may hold about others and the ones the locals may hold about you. Think them through, and following the examples list a few stereotypes you might have about your host country and stereotypes they might have about us.

*Our stereotypes of the people in the location we are visiting:*

<b>NEGATIVE</b>	<b>POSITIVE</b>
e.g. Inefficient; slow worker	e.g. Strong family relationships

*Stereotypes they have of us:*

<b>NEGATIVE</b>	<b>POSITIVE</b>
e.g. Too time-conscious	e.g. Generous

## Stereotypes Others Have of Americans

When you arrive in the host location, you may be viewed in a certain way just because you are a North American, a missionary or simply an “outsider.” It doesn’t seem fair, does it? But is there an element of truth in these views? Think about the stereotypes that follow, and then answer the questions in the spaces provided.

<b>NEGATIVE</b>	<b>POSITIVE</b>
e.g. Too time-conscious	e.g. Generous
Aggressive	Educated
Harshly pragmatic	Reliable
Tense	Strong Individuals
Discontent	Secured better lives
Lonely	Free of superstition
Corrupt	Confident
Wealthy and materialistic	Organized
Dominating	
Loud and Obnoxious	
Overbearing	
Competitive	
Selfish/self-centered	
Attitude of national superiority	
Preoccupied with efficiency	

*As you look through this list, what is your reaction? How do you feel?*

*Which of these apply to you? Would others see these in you?*

*Do you feel that you hold some of the stereotypes listed for people in your host location?*

*Which ones do you think may be valid? Why?*

*How might these stereotypes hinder the bridge-building process?*

You cannot change who you are. You will be perceived stereotypically from time to time, and this is not all bad. Stereotypes can have some merit and facilitate understanding. But as you know from experience, not every individual embodies all the characteristics of a particular stereotype. To be a bridge builder, you need to understand the reasons behind stereotypes. We bomb the bridge when we judge people without attempting to understand or giving them a chance to explain themselves.

## Bridge Building Involves Remembering Your Roles

There are three “roles” you will play that contribute to your ability as a bridge builder:

- The role of being a **guest** of the culture: Think of being a guest in someone’s home. How would you behave, react, interact, etc.? Or conversely, what expectations would you have of a guest in your home? What might please and/or irritate you?
- The role of being a **student** of the culture: Think of yourself as a person who is there to study and learn. How does a student get an “A” in school? What behaviors contribute to their success?
- The role of being a **servant** within the culture: Think of being a person who serves everyone he or she encounters in the country. How does a servant approach those whom he or she serves? How does a servant handle differences in others?

## Bridge-Building Applications

- **Accepting:** Accept the fact that you will not completely understand the people in just one trip. This is just a beginning so don’t become too frustrated with yourself.
- **Awareness:** Be aware that at times you may feel your prejudices. You may become frustrated with the way things are or the way people behave. Don’t deny the feelings; own them. Only then can you begin to understand the reasons behind them. Why are you frustrated? Being aware will help you grow in understanding the differences.
- **Listening:** Listen more than you talk. You are there to learn, not to instruct. The right to instruct is earned by demonstrating respect.
- **Giving:** Give of yourself. Take the initiative in group settings to reach out to the nationals. People can tend to shy away from contact with nationals, especially if they aren’t fluent in the language. Go ahead! Take a risk and try to speak the language. People will really appreciate the effort. And don’t worry; they’ll forgive you when you mess up.
- **Enjoying:** Enjoy the people, their culture and their language. If you don’t take yourself too seriously, you can have more fun. Help create an environment where they can enjoy you, your culture and your language just as you aim to enjoy theirs.

## The Art and Customs of Gift-Giving

You will meet some special people while you are on the field. People will do things for you as their guest, and you will want to show appreciation where appropriate.

If you stay in a home as a guest, you will want to give a gift to your host. You may meet a special friend to whom you want to give a gift. Many cultures are different when it comes to gift-giving, so ask your in-country host or your team leader about your specific country’s customs.

The following are some general principles that should be helpful:

- Gifts should be given at the end of the trip so as not to make the receiver feel obligated to give a gift in return.
- Gifts given to a host family should be of a nature that both husband and wife can enjoy.
- Gifts given to nationals should be given away from any group setting.
- When accepting an invitation to dinner at a home, it is usually customary to bring some gift. If it is the group, defer to your team leader. If you are going alone or in pairs, consult your team leader as to what is culturally acceptable.

- When giving gifts to a group of children, make sure you have enough for all children present.
- Give a gift that you would be proud to leave behind. Put yourself in the position of the receiver of the gift and ask yourself, “How would I feel about getting this gift?”
- Don’t be surprised or offended if the recipient of your gift responds in a subdued manner or even sets the gift aside unopened. It is considered inappropriate to fuss over a gift in some countries.
- Limit your gift-giving to no more than \$20 for someone serving you during the trip (driver, interpreter, etc.) per team. Typically tour drivers and translators are being compensated for their service to you at a level that is appropriate for their country’s economic structure. In some of the lower income areas where Bay Area sends teams, excessive gift-giving can lead to jealousies and problems in the local church that your host must try to straighten out after you leave.

## Requests from nationals

It is not unusual for national Christians to request large financial donations, expensive items or equipment for use in ministry. In general, people outside the U.S. believe that North Americans are wealthy and have access to considerable resources.

Rather than promising to fulfill their request, we ask that you only promise to inquire with your local host regarding the need. A request that seems feasible may actually be logistically impossible or inappropriate for you to fulfill.

Financial gifts to individual churches or schools should never be given or promised without checking with Bay Area leadership to determine legitimacy and whether that need has already been met.

## The issue of dependency

You may be wondering why we are emphasizing the issues of gift-giving and dependency. These related issues are an ongoing challenge in all mission work. The Lord has blessed us with an abundance of resources, and we are responsible for using those resources in a way that honors God. Unfortunately, we often fall into the trap of trying to solve problems by “throwing money” at them. This frequently has many unintended consequences.

At Bay Area we want to encourage generous giving. However, we want to be careful that the funds of generous givers are used wisely. With this in mind, we ask you to pay careful attention to the following:

## While on your trip

Please do not give personal gifts larger than \$20 to any individual, such as a translator, driver, etc. per team. Listen to and observe the needs around you on the trip but please do NOT promise anything in the way of financial support or gifts. Tell the individuals to whom you speak that you will share the need with your local host. In this way they can assist you in determining legitimate needs and appropriate responses.

## Following your trip

We are confident you will come home challenged to assist the believers in the locations where you served. We want to encourage your generosity. However, our experience has taught us that it works best when we work with the host/organization when distributing resources. Therefore we request that you consult with Bay Area church leadership as you consider your further financial involvement so they can help facilitate a wise and effective use of your resources.

We welcome your questions for clarification or comments regarding this issue. We want to do all we can to utilize our experience and expertise to make this the best trip possible for you and for our brothers and sisters we serve around the world.

## The Missionary Lifestyle

If we were to sum up these last several pages on culture shock and bridge building, we might say something like this:

*Seek opportunities to sacrifice.*

That's a pretty counter-cultural idea, but then again, so is the idea that the first shall be last, you must lose your life in order to gain it, and many other gospel truths. As we travel as learners of the host culture, followers of Jesus and ambassadors of our own culture, consider these words. Don't just accept sacrifice begrudgingly as it comes - whether in raising support, experiencing jet lag, trying unfamiliar foods, using your vacation hours, or something else. Instead, seek it out. Consider how Jesus might be made real to the people you serve as you model sacrificial love. Would you, for ten days, sacrifice your dislike for a certain type of food to honor your hosts? Would you sacrifice your pillow-top mattress to take the gospel to those who haven't heard it yet?

*What might sacrificial love look like toward your teammates? Toward your local host? Toward the people you will serve?*

*Along with your team, learn a few phrases in the local language: hello, goodbye, thank you. Jot them down below:*

### Complete before your next meeting:

1. Memorize Acts 17:26-27. Come prepared to share it with your team.
2. Share the gospel with one person this week!

### Complete after your cultural activity:

1. Jot down some notes or write a journal entry about the culture you experienced. What did you learn? Were there parts that made you uncomfortable? What did you like about the experience? You can use the worksheet on the next page to guide you.

# CULTURAL ACTIVITY REFLECTION

*What was your first impression of the culture you experienced?*

*Were there parts of the culture that made you uncomfortable? What was unfamiliar to you? How can you use this lack of familiarity or comfort to rely on God more fully during your short term missions trip?*

*What aspects of the culture did you enjoy? Share at least two positive characteristics. How can you embrace this culture in order to make your ministry more effective?*



## FIVE - STAYING SPIRITUALLY FRESH

**Memory Verse:** [John 15:5](#) I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

Short term missions are an adventure after the heart of God, and as we serve to bring light into darkness, we can expect opposition. John 10:10 tells us “the thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I [Jesus] came that they may have life and have it abundantly.” As your team nears your departure date, it’s time to consider one more crucial element of your trip - staying spiritually fresh so that you can truly experience the abundant life of Jesus and, out of the overflow of your own life, offer it to others through the good news of Jesus Christ. In this chapter, we’ll look at four questions to help us prepare together: How do you fight? How do you think? How do you rest? How do you share?

### How do you fight? (Spiritual Warfare)

Do you know that you have an enemy? For many of us in North America, this is where we need to start regarding spiritual warfare. Peter calls us to watchfulness in battle when he gives Christ-followers this charge:

*Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.*  
(1 Peter 5:8-10)

Around the world, Christians experience persecution for their faith and face the devil’s schemes daily. When you work to advance the gospel, you will face opposition. In Jesus, we can be confident that the devil will be conquered, but as a roaring lion, he will go down fighting. Only through Christ are we able to stand victorious. It takes practice in abiding to recognize and repel spiritual attacks. One especially instructive passage of Scripture in this area is Ephesians 6:10-18, which describes the armor of God. Take a moment now to study and reflect on these verses.

*Write out a prayer on an index card using Ephesians 6:10-18 as a guide. You may want to bring this along with you on your trip to remind you to wear your armor daily!*

### How do you think? (Prayer & Journaling)

As we rely on God in a new and exciting way, it’s common for fear or uncertainty to creep in. If you feel like that before or during your trip - you are not alone! Graciously, God has given us reassurance in His presence and practical help through the letters of Paul, Peter and James. We’ll study several passages together to consider our response to anxiety or uncertainty.

*Read 1 Peter 5:6-7, Philippians 4:6-9, Romans 12:1-2 and James 5:13-16. Then answer the questions on the next page and come prepared to discuss them with your team.*

*1 Peter 5:6-7 comes just before the passage about spiritual warfare quoted in the last section. How are these ideas related?*

*What is your normal reaction to anxiety or worry? How is that similar to or different than the reaction prescribed in these passages? What might God be calling you to do or believe differently?*

*What does James 5:13-16 say about our responsibility to “one another”?*

Whether you’ve prayed a million prayers or don’t even know where to begin, don’t worry! Prayer is meant to be a conversation with God; there are no scripts to follow so that God will listen. Scripture tells us that He delights in your prayer (Proverbs 15:8)! If you’re looking for a place to start, consider the acronym ACTS. It stands for Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving and Supplication and provides a framework and an order for our prayers:

- **Adoration** comes first - thanking God for who He is. Another way to think of adoration is worship. The Psalms are a great place to start!
- **Confession** involves being honest before God - it is agreeing with Him about the things you’ve done wrong. It’s also an opportunity to ask God to forgive you (1 John 1:9). Confession helps break down barriers that might restrict our communication with Him.
- **Thanksgiving** means being thankful for the good things that God has given you, like love, provision, forgiveness, joy, peace and much more!
- **Supplication** could also be called requests - praying for your own needs and the needs of others. Notice how this is listed last - although this is where many of our prayers tend to start!

Remember, this isn’t a formula that must be followed, but it’s a starting place to help you order your thoughts and prayers. Consider setting aside a specific place or time of day to pray leading up to your trip and after you return.

Prayer and journaling are two disciplines to help us examine our emotions, meditate on Scripture, and speak gospel truth over ourselves, our team and our ministry. Prayer is “powerful and effective” (James 5:16), and both disciplines help us slow down, discipline our mind and listen to God in the midst of busy days or trying experiences. Consider how you can grow in one or both of these disciplines during your short term missions journey, and come prepared to share with your team.

## How do you rest? (Sabbath)

We can easily find ourselves thinking about the things we will do on our missions trip: the lessons we will teach, the food we will eat or the skits we will perform. We may be prepared to get up early or stay up late. These things all have value, since we are going to accomplish “good works, which God prepared beforehand” (Ephesians 2:10). However, it’s just as important to think about rest. God provides the model for us in the creation account when He rests on the seventh day (Genesis 2:2-3), and He calls us to rest in Him daily - Jesus is our rest (Matthew 11:28).

We see throughout the gospels that Jesus “often withdrew to lonely places” (Luke 5:16) to pray and be alone with the Father. Before Jesus chose His disciples, He prayed (Luke 6:12). After his cousin John the Baptist died, He grieved (Matthew 14:13). Before He went to the cross, Jesus spent time in the garden, by Himself, alone with the Father (Luke 22:41-43). Throughout His life and ministry, Jesus models rest and time alone in prayer (Mark 1:35, 3:7, Luke 4:42) and invites His disciples into the same rest (Mark 6:31-32). Like Jesus, it’s often in our quiet, restful moments that we hear the voice of God most clearly and gain strength for the task at hand.

What does it look like to rest in the context of a missions trip and in our daily lives? The author of Hebrews gives us some insight:

*So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, for whoever has entered God’s rest has also rested from his works as God did from his. Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience. (Hebrews 4:9-11)*

What sort of disobedience? In Hebrews 3, the author is talking about Moses and the people of Israel, who did not enter the Promised Land because of unbelief. The foundation of rest is believing Jesus when He said “It is finished” (John 19:30). We don’t work to earn our salvation or worth before God; we serve out of the overflow of the work that Jesus has done on our behalf. In other words, we abide.

*Read our memory verse, John 15:5. On a scale of one to ten (ten being extremely difficult), how challenging is it for you to abide in Jesus? How might you grow in this area during your short term missions journey?*

Rest is spiritual, emotional, mental and physical. Spiritual rest sets the foundation, and it comes only through abiding in Jesus. It’s important to consider your emotional, mental and physical rest as well. How do you recharge when you’ve had a mentally taxing day at work, had an emotionally charged conversation, or are running on little sleep? Each of us may rest differently - some listen to music, some sleep, some exercise, some talk with friends, some read or write. It’s important to know that you may not have all of these options available to you on your missions trip - consider what your secondary rest option may be as well as your primary choice. The better you know yourself, the better you will be able to rest well and remain refreshed and ready to serve.

*How do you rest well? Write your answer below, and share it with your team leader and your trip roommate.*

### **How do you share? (Team Communication)**

Finally, an important part of staying spiritually fresh is how we interact with our team. As you live in close proximity to others amidst an unfamiliar culture, conflict can and will arise. The unity that you strive for, the honesty and love with which you communicate, and how you handle conflict will all impact the experience and effectiveness of your team on the mission field. As always, the Bible instructs us in how we should live in community with other believers. Read Ephesians 4 as we consider these questions.

*Read Ephesians 4:1-6. How and why should we seek to be unified as a team?*

*Read Ephesians 4:15. Why is speaking the truth in love important? How do you ensure you are being both truthful and loving?*

*Read Ephesians 4:22-32. How does this passage address conflict? How can you build up others with your words and actions?*

It's important to have an atmosphere of authenticity within your team. Don't hide how you're feeling; at the same time, be willing to listen and apply Biblical truth in challenging situations. With a foundation of love and trust, your team communication creates space for the Holy Spirit to speak to each team member through your missions journey.

*How have you seen your team grow in communication throughout your journey? Is there a step you need to take to build a foundation of love and trust?*

*Reflect on what you've learned in this chapter. What is one practical step you can take between now and your departure date to grow in one (or more) of these four areas (fight, think, rest, share)?*

**Complete before your next meeting:**

1. Memorize John 15:5. Come prepared to share it with your team.
2. Meet up with at least one other team member (in person or by phone) to pray together!
3. Optional: Write a journal entry about your upcoming missions trip. You can use the prompt on the next page to guide you.

**Complete after your next meeting:**

1. Pack! (You can find a sample packing list on Managed Missions under "Links")
2. Spend time with family and friends.
3. Read Part 1 of Chapter 6 before your flight (you'll need good internet access to complete the section).



## PRE-TRIP JOURNAL PROMPT

Take some time to write down your thoughts, emotions, expectations or worries prior to your trip. Then, look back after your trip to see how God showed up in those areas. You can use the questions listed below to help.

*How has God changed you through the short term missions process so far?*

*What fears, worries or anxiety do you have about this trip? Write out a few passages of Scripture that can help you abide in Jesus amidst these emotions.*

*What are you most excited about?*

*What are you most uncertain about?*

*What do you hope God will do through this missions trip in your life and in the lives of others?*





## SIX - TEAM RE-ENTRY

**Memory Verse:** Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

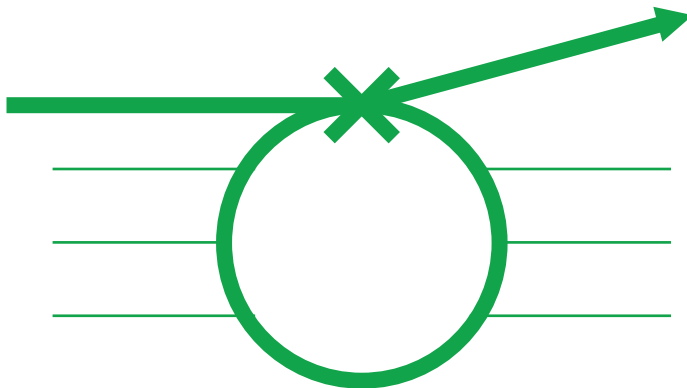
Bay Area Lead Pastor Greg St. Cyr calls short term missions “the fast track to discipleship.” For the past several months, you’ve lived in rich community, shared your faith, prayed, sacrificed and worshiped God together. You’re in the midst of creating a unique shared experience that will likely echo into eternity. This trip is a *Kairos Moment* in your life - an event or opportunity of significance. As your departure approaches, we want to set the stage for Kairos Moments - how we identify them and what God might be calling us to do with them.

This final chapter is meant to be read in two parts. In the first section, which you’ll complete before you depart, we’ll learn about Kairos Moments and review our role as disciples, receiving from and responding to Jesus. In the second section, which you’ll complete on your way home or shortly after you return from your trip, we’ll discover strategies for dealing with reverse culture shock and discuss avenues to share our stories in meaningful ways. Finally, we’ll round out our time together by talking about the next steps of your journey in line with Bay Area’s vision statement: Every One A Missionary.

### PART ONE

#### Kairos Moments

Think back to significant moments in your life - maybe it was a graduation, a marriage, a job lost or offered, or the death of a loved one. Each of these events shaped you in some way. If you take the time to receive and respond to Jesus (see Chapter 2 for a refresher) in community with the others who have shared this journey, a short term missions trip can similarly affect the trajectory of your life. We’ll begin by watching a short video about Kairos Moments. (You can find this link on your Managed Missions site.) As you watch, fill in the diagram below:



The big picture here is that, as disciples of Jesus, we should be in the rhythm of receiving from and responding to Him. The right side of the circle are the steps we take, whether we consciously do it or not, to *receive* from God. We ask the question “What is God saying to me?” The left side of the circle is the process to *respond*. We ask the question “What am I to do about it?” When we come out of the top of the circle, we are now set on a new trajectory - becoming more Christ-like.

It's important to consider what, exactly, you have learned and how God may be calling you to change in the days and months ahead. Throughout your trip and debrief process, your team leader will help you work through this Learning Circle to consider how you might receive from God and respond to Him in each instance. You will consider questions like “when did you feel affirmed?”, “what was your lowest point on the trip?” and others to help stimulate discussion and help you identify key moments or ideas. You'll learn much more about the Kairos Moment from your team leader and get a chance to practice together throughout your trip or during your team debrief. For now, the goal is to be aware, be on the lookout for Kairos Moments, and continue to be prepared for spiritual warfare and refreshed through prayer, journaling, rest and community.

*In your own words, what is a Kairos Moment? What is the significance of the Learning Circle?*

You'll read the next section on your way home or shortly after returning from your trip.

## PART TWO

Welcome back! Over the last few weeks, our prayer is that you've met with God and others in a new and significant way. You've experienced a new culture and expanded your spiritual family by getting to know other Jesus-followers and sharing the gospel with others in another part of the nation or world. Now, it's time to reintegrate back into your home culture, bringing your new experiences with you. Re-entry, or reverse culture shock, is a normal adjustment after a short term missions experience, especially one outside of the country. We'll discuss ways to cope with re-entry stress and share strategies of storytelling in this final section.

### Reverse Culture Shock

Most people feel some excitement upon returning. It's exciting to see family and friends, enjoy a familiar meal, and share stories and photos from your trip. However, once you are back home you may also find yourself struggling to adjust. While life has gone on without you at home, you have experienced a significant change that impacts the way you see the world and your own culture. You may respond in several ways - by isolating yourself, becoming angry or apathetic, or by integrating your experiences. Though you may experience some or all of these responses as you re-enter your home culture, the goal is to integrate your short term missions experience with the rest of your life, so that it is less of a one-time event and more of a change in trajectory - a Kairos Moment.

The first response is to **isolate**. You may begin to feel like a “fish out of water.” You may find yourself withdrawing from others or feeling a strong guilt over your home culture's affluence or materialism. Because you have changed, it seems like you no longer belong.

Another possibility is to **agitate** or become angry. You may feel ire toward your culture, friends, family or church. It seems that no one understands you. Everyone is different from before you left - even his or her lifestyle or values are bad. You may find yourself mocking or think that others' values or actions appear foolish.

The third option is to **accommodate** or be apathetic. In this response, you simply go back to life as it has always been, ignoring the changes and struggles you experience. You resume life as if nothing has happened, imitating those around you who did not have a cross-cultural experience. Perhaps you are concerned about the repercussions of being different or standing on your (potentially new) convictions.

**If you experience one or more of these responses to reverse culture shock, know that it is normal - but be unwilling to remain there permanently.** Share your experiences with your team leader or someone else who has experienced culture shock before, and use the Learning Circle and the safety/vulnerability of Christian community to ask “what is God saying to me?” and “what should I do about it?”

The final and optimal way to cope is to **integrate**. In this response, you relate back with the home culture in a way that does not compromise or negate your new values or the lessons you learned. You continue as a learner - a disciple - while creating a unique lifestyle incorporating the old and the new. Seek like-minded people to help foster your integration, and be willing to help others who find themselves walking through one or more of the other three coping strategies.

Here are some other practical suggestions that may help your integration:

- Find other returnees with whom you can share and have fellowship. Discuss the needs of the world and pray for them. Learn to think globally.
- Give yourself time to re-adjust; be patient with yourself and with others.
- Recognize and accept which transition stage or option you are going through, remembering that reverse culture shock or re-entry stress is a normal part of the process of returning home.
- Have a good sense of humor.
- Let your re-entry work for you; use it as a growing process to continue learning about yourself.
- Appreciate the opportunity you had to travel outside of your comfort zone.
- Review the most significant changes you have undergone and the implications of those changes.
- Consciously apply your theology of culture (seeing both patterns of exploitation and idolatry and patterns of loveliness and kindness) to your home culture.
- Cultivate friendships with people from the region where you visited that are international students or businesspersons.
- Help your friends and church know what questions to ask you. Try to look at your ministry from their context and tie your concerns to their values.
- Recognize that your friends and supporters may be under a great deal of stress themselves. Be prepared to counsel, comfort, pray for and bless them as much as receive their counsel and care.
- Keep a clear perspective and remember that God is there with you!

*Thanks to Lisa Espineli Chinn, Interaction, Inc. and Miriam Adeney. Adapted by Don Johnson, SEND International*

Finally, let's address some re-entry fantasies you may consider:

- ***I will write to everyone I met.*** This is a feeling that quickly disappears when home, but do stay in touch with one or two people. This communication will help you adjust to being home and will help keep your new vision alive.

- **People are dying to hear about my trip.** Some people would rather die than hear about your trip. Very few people want all the details and schedules. Prepare a specific story about a person or lesson learned. Share this clearly and briefly. Leave them wanting more. We'll talk about the "one word / one story" debrief more in the next few pages.
- **I will be glad to be home.** There are likely things you will have missed. However, you may experience some depression. Recognize this is a part of re-entry. Call teammates and begin applying this experience to your life as quickly as possible.
- **I have a new purpose.** You will return with new vision in life and may find your home, job and activities purposeless. Ask God how you can enhance the activities in which you are involved and bring His purpose into them.
- **I am truly spiritual.** Watch out, this fantasy can cause you to judge, judge, judge and judge! Remember those you are returning to have not had the experience you have. Share what you learned and let God work in them - in the same way that you are not responsible for others' response to the gospel, you are not responsible for others' response to your experience.
- **I am going to sell all my possessions.** This is a reaction fantasy. God may want you to adjust your lifestyle for His purposes; however, He doesn't call you to prove something to Him. Ask God to guide you in the areas you need to change.
- **I have fulfilled my missions responsibility.** Some people are glad to be back and think they can check the "missions thing" off their list. If you stay open with God, He will use the experience for His purposes for years to come. Allow your experience to change you.
- **God is calling my spouse.** Perhaps He is. However, remember God had a specific plan to change your heart. He will need to work in their heart too. Be patient with your spouse and family when you return. They may not understand what you are feeling.
- **I am going to be a Long-Term Missionary.** This is a fantasy which could become a reality! If you have this idea, don't become discouraged if it seems unattainable. Seek advice and counsel, and move toward this possibility one step at a time.
- **I will never be the same.** This is not a fantasy! How much you allow the cross-cultural experience to affect you is up to you.

*The Top Ten Fantasies of Returning Short-termers, written by Larry Ragan (CultureLink); adapted by Don Johnson (SEND International)*

*How is re-entry going so far? What has been the best part of your return home? What has been the most challenging aspect?*

## Sharing Your Story

Good-byes are fresh. Tears from telling your new friends you hope to see them again are tucked behind your eyes. The excitement of memories, the pictures of experiences, and the new lessons you have learned are racing through your mind. There is much to tell and now you're home. What do you share? How do you communicate what you have been through?

We each desire to express our missions experience with others. We want people to grasp what we are communicating. The disappointment of discovering that not all people are interested in our venture is disheartening for many returning laborers. With this combination of desire and potential disappointment, it is important for short-termers to know how to communicate their experience.

This article addresses the role sharing your story has for you and others. It also discusses why it is important to process what you are going to share and gives creative ways to communicate to individuals and groups.

## **Why It Is Important to Share Your Experience**

To tell about a short-term experience is beneficial for both the one sharing and the listener. For the short-term missionary, this exercise solidifies the lessons learned and the vision that has been built, and aids them in processing the pleasant as well as the difficult parts of their trip. For the listener, it is often God's tool for challenging them to be involved in the Great Commission.

As a short-term missionary you assume the role of a vision builder when you share your experience. Each lesson you learned potentially becomes a challenging lesson for your listener. Each time you speak of God's provisions, it can be used to bring the listener into a closer relationship with God. You become a teacher of the joys of missions and a challenger for world evangelization when you express the pleasures and hurts of your experience. It is important to take the time to process which aspects of your trip you want to share and how.

As you review the creative communication techniques below, keep in mind the different audiences to which they can be applied. These techniques are designed to facilitate your spiritual growth and to be used to challenge others.

## **Creative Techniques for Sharing Your Story**

### **Method 1 - Journal Segmenting**

The process of sharing your story begins before your arrival home. The preparation time and the trip are often bursting with wonderful nuggets of God's faithfulness. A means of capturing those moments is through journaling. When you journal remember that you may want to share these experiences with others. Journal more than events. Record your impressions, thoughts and feelings. This process helps you see God working in your life and will allow you to communicate the trip with clarity and depth.

Journal segmenting is using parts of your written memories to communicate concise aspects of the trip. There are numerous ways to use journal segmenting to tell your story. One short-termers took paragraphs from his first impressions of the country, his ministry experience and his feelings during his departure and placed them in a letter. He used this as his follow-up letter to all his prayer and financial supporters. Another stood before his congregation reading a series of entries laced strategically together. This kept him from stumbling and kept his testimony concise.

Another creative means for using your journal is in discussions with a leader or pastor. When the "how was your trip" question comes, it becomes easy to say, "I'd like to read one entry that captures the trip for me." This allows you to clearly communicate a specific part of your trip, shows you are respectful of the leader's time, and enables you to leave a copy of the entry for them to read again. Using a journal segment in this way can often leave the listener wanting more.

### **Method 2 - Storytelling**

Not all personality types enjoy journaling; however, everyone, whether shy or outgoing, enjoys telling a story. Storytelling is the process of identifying one aspect of a trip and determining how to communicate it with clarity. It can be used with an individual or an audience.

Part of our re-entry training is for each person to share one specific story about the trip with the team prior to coming home. This exercise causes them to identify a specific experience and practice relating it. This process prevents information dumping on

the listener once the missionary is home. We call this “one word, one story”. In this technique, think of one word to answer the question “how was your trip?” Stay away from words like “good,” “awesome,” or “cool” in favor of words like “eye-opening” or “convicting” or “humbling.” These latter words open up an opportunity for further conversation and one quick story that aligns with that particular description.

Effective storytelling is similar to effective journaling. It is important to share the facts of the event as well as your personal impressions, feelings and thoughts. When choosing a specific story, think of special people like a faithful national worker who inspired you to greater service. Think of a unique event. In Bulgaria a team prayed for God to restore electrical power that had failed in the middle of an evangelistic outreach. He did so immediately and the life of that meeting is impressed in those team members’ memories forever. Think of an impactful scene like the natural beauty of the country or the stark reality of the slums in a poverty-stricken area. As you think of these things, identify one or two and build a story around them.

No matter what your specific story is, think through it before you share it so that its effectiveness will be multiplied. Remember to keep it concise.

### Method 3 - Photos

Take your photos and place them neatly in an album - either print or digital. Mark the pages that relate to the story or journal entry you are going to share. As you tell your story, flip to those specific photos. When your story is finished the listener will want to investigate the remaining photos and their questions will come naturally. Use your story and initial photos to draw them into your experience.

### Using Creative Communication Techniques

The above techniques may seem basic, yet few returning missionaries implement them. If these simple tools are used, our prayer is the interest in missions would increase as people hear specific stories about God’s faithfulness and how the short-term missions experience is used to change lives.

God is in the discipling business. Your short-term experience is one of His tools for discipling you. You sharing your experience through your journal, stories and pictures is one of His tools for discipling others. Take the time to prepare what and how you are going to communicate.

*Thanks to Larry Ragan (Culturelink) “Help! I’m Going on a Short-term Trip”*

*How are you going to share your story? With whom do you expect to share it?*

### Complete before your final team meeting:

1. Memorize Acts 1:8. Come prepared to share it with your team. Do you remember all seven memory verses?
2. Complete Post-Trip Evaluation. (You can find the link in Managed Missions under Tasks.)
3. Complete the Settling In exercise and come prepared to share with your team.

# SETTLING IN EXERCISE

*(to be completed one month after returning home)*

Complete the following sentences in your own words - write what comes to mind and use this exercise to help you process your short term missions journey so far. Be prepared to share this with your team at your post-trip debrief!

Now that I am back home, I feel ...

I find it easy to ...

I find it hard to ...

I wish ...

The people who I feel understand me are ...

I enjoy being with ...

I enjoy (activity) ...

My family says I ...

My friends say I ...

My pastor says I ...

I need help in ...

I need someone who ...

I think God wants me to learn that ...

## NEXT STEPS

Over the last several months, you have stepped out in faith to *go on a short term missions trip*. In fact, during your short term missions journey you have experienced many ways to grow as a follower of Jesus. You've *connected in community* with your team and others, you've *worshipped together* in another culture, you've *shared the gospel*, and you've *served like Jesus*. As we return and integrate our missions experience into our lives in our home culture, our final step together is to look back at how God has changed us and look forward to how we can more fully walk in God's vision for us as passionate, maturing followers of Jesus from here to the nations. Consider these potential next steps - if you're not sure what you need to do or how to get connected, ask your team leader. He or she can point you in the right direction.

- **Commit to worshipping** together each week - make corporate church gatherings a priority in your schedule.
- **Attend First Step** to learn more about Bay Area or get connected to a Missional Community or a serving team. Missional Communities are groups of people loving God, each other and their neighbors; serving at our weekend gatherings is a great way to stay connected and be a part of the life and family here at Bay Area. To register for the next First Step opportunity, go to [bayareacc.org/nextsteps](http://bayareacc.org/nextsteps).
- **Become a Ministry Partner.** Ministry Partnership is a commitment to joining hands with the family at Bay Area. To become a Ministry Partner, you must complete Ministry Partner Orientation. You can learn more at [bayareacc.org/nextsteps](http://bayareacc.org/nextsteps).
- **Learn more.** If your STM piqued your interest in what God is doing around the world, consider attending Perspectives on the World Christian Movement or pick up a book like *Let the Nations be Glad* (John Piper). Ask your team leader for other ideas!
- **Go again - or go longer.** Whether it's signing up for another short term trip or spending a few months or years with our global partners, we're excited to see what God has in store. You can email [missions@bayareacc.org](mailto:missions@bayareacc.org) to start the conversation.
- **Send others.** Consider financially or prayerfully supporting other missionaries, whether short-, mid- or long-term. Do you have a friend or family member that needs some encouragement to go?
- **Share the gospel with your neighbors.** Review Chapter 3 of this manual for a refresher on one sharing method and pray that God would send you out among the harvest (Luke 10:2).
- **See yourself as a missionary wherever you go.** Annapolis, India, Poland or Odenton: Every one a missionary.

*What is your next step? Write out your thoughts below. Then share it with at least one person on your team and ask them to hold you accountable.*





