



Team Manual

Envision Trips



How to Use This Manual

Hello, Envision trip participants!

We are so excited to be ministering alongside you.

We created this manual to help us do this well together. As those serving on the ground, you have an incredible capacity for influence—both good and bad. We trust that you want this to be good, and we are confident that it can be. In an era where short-term missions are under scrutiny, we believe that it is still good and beneficial to participate in short-term trips with a long-term perspective. This trip is not an isolated experience but one of many learning experiences that will propel you forward in your faith journey.

That being said, we want to equip you with the framework to navigate your trip well. We want you to understand God's work in the world and His invitation to join Him (missiology). We also want to equip you well to navigate another culture (cultural training), whether you cross an ocean or not, so that you can humbly learn from your hosts. We also know language is important, so we'll talk about how to share about your trip (communication) and how to come home well, applying things you have learned (debrief).

We hope that the following tools will be truly useful as you prepare for your trip. This is an important moment in your faith journey—let's make the most of it and sew into this trip that will continue to grow throughout your lifetime!

We're glad you're here and anticipate good things for our journey together.



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Reimagining Short-Term Missions

You've probably heard some criticisms of short-term missions trips: "*They're too expensive;*" "*they're culturally oppressive;*" "*it's just tourism with a spiritual name!*"

And to say these accusations are wrong would be, well, wrong! There are most assuredly unhealthy things happening in the world of short-term missions with a negative impact on participants, recipients, and overall, the Church. The feelings of anger, frustration, or injustice are rightly felt.

However, in the midst of this frustration, we believe there's reason to not only be hopeful, but to continue, or rather, *reimagine*, participation in a new way. We want to leave behind outdated, inaccurate, and unintentional thinking and methodology that hurts the global Church. We want to pick up right thinking, right theology, and right practice. To do this, it's a good idea to pick up a little history on the subject.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF SHORT-TERM MISSIONS

Western missions (assuming those of us reading this are from Western countries), have been going on for several hundred years. At its beginning, the idea of short-term missions or trips wasn't even on the radar. Sometime, around 40-ish years ago, long-term missionaries recognized a need to recruit and bring more workers to the field. A great way to introduce potential workers was to set up a vision trip for these folks with the intention of returning for a more long-term position. These vision trips slowly morphed into something that even those not considering long-term work were invited to join. Language changed too; it used to be that long-term workers were often those describing a "call"—so much so that it moved them to pack their belongings in a coffin (yes, really), as they didn't anticipate returning. Now, those going for 10 days have "call" stories, while their levels of commitment and sacrifice look vastly different. It's likely if you just hear the word "missions" today, the first thing that comes to your mind would be a short-term trip rather than long-term work.

Besides history, we also need to note changes, not just in the *missions* world, but in the world around us that have influenced how we view and participate in short-term missions.

LANDSCAPE CHANGES

Some major changes have shaped the way we live over the last couple hundred years. The Industrial Revolution, for one, means that we are more connected than ever before—we can use our computers, smart phones, and tablets to connect anytime, anywhere. We can even connect on a plane, which we can catch at a moment's notice to the other side of the world

for a fairly affordable price and with relative ease compared to travel historically. We have far greater access to travel, information, and connection than any other time in history, and this means there are major changes for how we see and participate in global missions.

So, how does this shape the way we do short-term trips? We've thought through a few ways this can shape our thinking and practice as we pursue healthier participation in the world of short-term missions.

REIMAGINING OURSELVES

There are a few crucial shifts we need to make in how we view ourselves and our role. The first shift is moving from **saviors to participants**.

It's common for us to view trips through the lens of *"What did we accomplish?"* We love before and after photos and explaining all the things we accomplished. This often ends up sounding like we're the hero, swooping in to save and do what the people we're serving cannot do. It elevates us to a position we're not meant to take. Remember, we're on God's mission. He doesn't need us! He's been doing this work for a long time and was working in the particular city or country you're now in before you were there! We are, by grace, invited to participate alongside Him.

The second shift we need to make is moving from **experts to learners**. We live in an era of being able to discover anything by Googling it. This is not a substitute for extensive cross-cultural experience or the wisdom of time. Entering our short-term trips, we cannot expect Wikipedia to get us to the same level of expertise on what, when, and how we'll do ministry. Something we can both celebrate, and practice caution towards, is our Western "can-do" spirit. This can be a gift, but also a hindrance, when we come in making demands as the "experts." We need to defer to local experts (i.e. the workers receiving us and the local church) to let them share with us how to minister in a place.

The last shift is moving from **priority to secondary**. To be blunt, your experience or growth is not the most important part of the trip. If we make this the focal point, we're going to skew the purposes of trips. The real priority is joining God at work. Everything else is secondary. Life change or growth is a natural byproduct of life with Jesus. Don't sacrifice people or ministry on the altar of your own self-actualization.

REIMAGINING OUR HOSTS

When we say the word "host," we often think of the person or family that we spend the most time with on our trip. This needs to be expanded to include anyone serving or ministering alongside them, any local churches you're partnered with, and really any locals at all.

The first shift to make when it comes to our hosts is a language shift—moving from **"for" to "with."** Language influences thought, and this particular language, which is common in our short-term trips, creates an us/them mentality. When we go on a trip to do things "for," it communicates an unconscious power differential. "For" insinuates a greater doing something for a lesser. It creates an imbalanced partnership. By moving to "with" language, we put all participants on the same level. "With" means that power must be shared. We do

not call the shots. For us, it will put us in a place we're often uncomfortable. You could also say that "with" instead of "for" places the emphasis on *being* instead of *doing*. This is a cultural shift for us from the West. It takes us out of a position of power, as those who can do on behalf of others, and levels the playing field, leading us to our next point.

We need to shift from seeing our hosts as **needy to having something to give**. We often put a focus on *doing* because we're thinking about what we have and what those we go to serve are lacking. This comes from a one-dimensional view of poverty—seeing it as purely material. Poverty can also look relational, spiritual, and emotional, none of which we can say are strong points for those of us in the West. What can we learn from our brothers and sisters? Instead of focusing so much on giving to them, what can we receive? How can we learn about the beauties of community (relational), of lament and suffering (emotional), and the power of the Holy Spirit (spiritual)?

Some key practices to get us on the right track are **contextualization and empowerment**. Contextualization means putting something "in context" so that it makes sense to people. We can't accidentally export Western culture along with the gospel in a way that confuses the people who hear it. For example, when we do an altar call in the West, it often involves individuals raising hands and coming up front. In a shame-based culture, like Thailand, something like this would get in the way of the right message coming across. We need to think sensitively about how we do ministry and defer to our hosts who know how to do this more effectively.

Empowerment means giving power to someone to do something or becoming more confident in controlling one's life. When we empower our hosts and the local church, they can appropriately lead and cast vision for ministries in a way that makes sense culturally. If it's done in a foreign way, it's not only not going to stick over time, but it can also create unnecessary confusion between what is gospel and what is cultural.

REIMAGINING OUR TRIPS

Lastly, we need to think through the way we think and communicate about our trips. The first shift we can make is moving from an emphasis on **experience to discipleship**. We tend to think about our trips in a vacuum, and when we get back, it's back to normal life, arguably losing any benefits of the trip over time. We can be more strategic about our trips! Instead of thinking of them as a one-off experience, think about them as yet another stop in the discipleship process. This means asking if the trip is the right timing for particular participants. The importance of mentors (outside of the limited trip leaders) following up with participants, asking hard questions, and walking with participants cannot be undervalued. The importance of training, debriefing, and connecting the trip to overall church life is huge. When we minimize trips to an experience, we miss out on further opportunities for growth.

Another shift is moving from trips that are **isolated to integrated**. Isolated trips are unconnected to long-term work—a sort of "parachute in" mentality. By doing our trips in an integrated manner, alongside long-term workers and the church, it means we're connecting to something indigenous, not importing something foreign. It means that the work that happens begins before and continues after we leave—making it less about what we do and more about steady faithfulness in the same direction. It may mean that the work we

participate in is more mundane. It's less about accomplishing a particular task or "saving the day" in a week. It's about supporting the long-term work of God in a place and humbly acknowledging that our week-long trip is just a snippet of that. The pressure of expectation to "produce something" is off.

We've talked reimagining *ourselves*, our *hosts*, and our *trips*. There are, of course, tons of other healthy ways to reapproach and think about our short-term efforts. Don't let this be the only exploring you do on this subject! But, if you can start to apply some of these concepts and talk about them with your team, it can lead to healthier, more stable short-term work that will bless, instead of harm, the ministries with whom you partner.

Here are a few questions, or starting points, for you as you apply these ideas to your trip:

1. How do I share about my short-term trips?
(What language do I use? What sort of idea does this communicate about my role, about my partners, and about missions? Do I use "for" or "with?")
2. What are my expectations for my trip?
(Are these healthy? Do any of these play into ideas of being the "savior" of coming in to "accomplish" a bunch of stuff?)
3. What am I lacking that I can look to learn, or receive, from those who are hosting me?
4. What's going on in my own faith journey? What could be key discipleship moments that God has for me on this trip?
5. Who can partner with me, as a mentor, to ask hard questions and to follow-up with me when I return home?



Missio Dei

You've probably heard a variety of reasons for going on a short-term trip: "It could change your life; it's a good excuse to travel; it could jump-start your personal growth; or it could give you an idea of direction for your future."

While these can all be reasons to be involved in mission, there's a bigger and better *why* for this. It's called *Missio Dei* or the mission of God.

The mission of God is not something new or something that the Western Church started a couple hundred years ago. We don't bring it with us when we go to a new place. God is already there and has already been there since the beginning. Just because we are new to the reality of *Missio Dei* doesn't mean it's new to God. It's been going on for centuries, and it began in the Garden of Eden. We tend to focus on the New Testament, but the seeds of *Missio Dei* are in Genesis as God is making a promise to fallen humanity that He will send one who will "crush" the serpent, putting everything back into right relationship with God.

Much like we personally feel chosen by God to participate in mission (on your current short-term trip, for example), God has been choosing His Church to play a role. Thankfully, ours is not the only past dotted with mistakes and failures to act. Israel's is much the same. The chosen people are themselves in need of rescue. God's rescue mission does not depend on people; it's not contingent on their obedience or thwarted by their rebellion. God invites participation, but this is ultimately His work, and it will be done.

In the midst of the ongoing and unstoppable *Missio Dei*, we find a unique reality, or strategy, of God. John 1 says: "The Word became flesh, and made His dwelling among us." Jesus came incarnationally to be a witness to the inbreaking Kingdom, or mission of God. He began the fulfillment of the long-ago promise of God to bring redemption. His Incarnation gives us the strategy, and His death and Resurrection gives us the power. It's also important not to skip over the coming of the Holy Spirit who lives in us and empowers us to be able to live this out (Acts 1:8).

So, we're called to participate in the *Missio Dei* by the strategy of incarnation. There is both an inward and outward tension here. If we do not remember that we are also the target of God's mission—His Kingdom has to take root in our own lives and brokenness—we will lack the perseverance and depth to be able to live this out incarnationally. We cannot do one without the other.

A beautiful example of this relationship is the Trinity. The Trinity is the mysterious relationship between Father, Son, and Spirit. We know that the Trinity is always drawing close and that it is a relationship of love (Matthew 3:16-17). But, they're not just drawing close, they're constantly sending. The Father sends the Son, the Son sends the Spirit (John 14-16), and the Spirit sends us. The motivation for mission is intimate relationship with God. But, the outcome of that relationship is movement out (incarnation). They're two sides of the same coin—always drawing close for greater depth and always sending out for more mission.

As you move towards mission and incarnation, what do you need? Walk through the following questions alone or with your team or discuss it with a friend.

Missio Dei Questions

1. What has been God's redemptive work in my own life?
(God is always calling Israel to remember; this creates humility, helps us to remain dependent, and helps us to celebrate God's hand in our own lives.)
2. What could incarnation look like on this trip?
3. What do I need to help me to participate in *Missio Dei*?
(Do I need a reminder of the Father's love? Do I need a fresh filling of the Spirit? Do I need to reflect on what Jesus has done for me?)
4. How can I see or look for *Missio Dei* already happening where I am going?
5. What might incarnation look like when I return home?



Cross Cultural Sensitivity

You're crossing cultures—maybe for the first time ever!

This can be scary and exciting, not to mention, you're probably experiencing low-level stress as you learn to do everything in a new way. You're eating food that's different, you're learning that traffic laws are different, you're hearing a different language, and you're most likely being stared at because you look different. You'll notice you're more tired on this trip because the patterns you're used to and your daily unspoken expectations are being completely thrown off. You might be responding with excitement and anticipation or you might be cautious and anxious. Either way, you're moving through the process of cultural transition, and it's okay and normal to be experiencing this.

How you respond, however, makes all the difference. The conclusions you draw are equally important.

In the next couple pages, you'll find suggestions for ways to lean into this tension of being immersed in a new culture. It might not always go well—you might feel awkward, embarrassed, or nervous. Give yourself grace. Also keep in mind that you are entering as a learner and a listener. Take a page from your site staff's book or watch a local before trying something. Ask nonjudgmental questions about what's happening or how things are done. Be open to correction—most likely people are trying to help you, not embarrass you. Others have made these same mistakes before and still more will who come after you. You're in good company. This isn't an excuse to do things poorly, but permission for you to learn and grow and be challenged.

As you wrestle with the differences between your culture and the culture you are entering, be slow to cast judgment. All cultures have aspects that reflect God's character that we can celebrate and enjoy. All cultures also have aspects that need redeeming. Before passing judgment or becoming critical, ask someone who knows the culture more about it. And before hastily condemning your own culture, find aspects of it to celebrate too. As the Body is made up of many parts and each part is unique and valued, so we also get to celebrate God's beauty in other cultures—and in our own.

Terms & Definitions

HIGH POWER DISTANCE

Cultures with high power distance are comfortable with clear roles for those in authority and those who follow. This is celebrated, not defied. The value is group harmony. Anything that challenges this is seen as a threat.

LOW POWER DISTANCE

Cultures with low power distance value democracy and inclusive decision making. Special privileges for those in authority are looked at with scrutiny. Equality is the value.

COLLECTIVIST

Collectivist cultures think in “we,” not “I.” They value processes or things that will propel the group forward; individuals serve the needs of the group. The value is on relationships.

INDIVIDUALIST

Individualist cultures value self-actualization and anything that benefits the needs or desires of the individual. If those things come at the cost of group harmony, that’s okay.

INDIRECT

(or High Context)

Indirect cultures communicate mainly through nonverbals rather than actual speech. This helps preserve group harmony and protect individuals and groups from shame. Time is fluid, and ambiguity is to be expected. The focus is on harmony and relationship.

DIRECT

(or Low Context)

Direct cultures communicate plainly through their words. The emphasis is on tasks and efficiency rather than relationship. Time is a commodity, and individuals in direct cultures are comfortable with conflict and competition. Ambiguity is viewed as a threat, so minimizing this as much as possible is the goal.



Ways to Engage

TRY A NEW FOOD

Even if you've never had it before, you may like it or at least have a great story to tell afterwards.

LEARN THE LANGUAGE

Challenge yourself to pick up 1-2 phrases during your time, and practice using them daily!

ASK THE HOLY SPIRIT

You're immersed in a culture that has a different perspective on God and how He works. Ask the Holy Spirit for eyes to see and for your capacity to know Him to be expanded.

TALK TO A LOCAL

Listen to their story. Ask about family, job, food—whatever! Take it as an opportunity to posture yourself as a listener, and pick up tidbits you might otherwise miss.

DITCH THE PHONE

If there's one thing we've noticed takes us away from being present, it's phones. Leave it behind this week, or keep it on "airplane mode." Your FOMO from home will end up being real FOMO from your trip.

LIVE IN UNCERTAINTY

In your normal life, we're guessing there's not a whole lot of ambiguity or spontaneity in your schedule. Practice living in the moment this week, and trust your team leader and site team to take care of the details without you asking about it constantly.

GO FIRST

There are going to be a lot of opportunities to try something new this week. Volunteer to go first, at least once, and perhaps your courage will also encourage others!

SHARE YOUR STORY

Oftentimes, the culture you're entering loves hearing a "testimony" from their visitors. Prepare a 3-5 minute story from your faith journey, and be ready to share!

CELEBRATE

Celebrate with your team the ways you've engaged that day. Who knows, your creative idea or story may inspire someone else to lean in!



Social Media & The Short-Term Missionary

We've all seen it, and some of us don't want to admit it, but we've been there—the perfect Instagram shot of a missions trip. It's hard to distinguish between the purpose of the trip and the purpose of the post. Is this about “likes” or the Kingdom? There's nothing inherently wrong with social media, but let's dialogue about social media and short-term missions.

One of the dangers of social media is creating a virtual life, separate from reality. We don't often realize it, but we may use social media to numb or escape our boring or painful existence. The problem is, when we go on a missions trip, everything we feel in our culture (and everything we escape from) will be exaggerated because of the atmospheric change of the new culture. Social media can especially help us escape one of the scariest things in our society—silence. It's hard to wait in general, but when we're always connected, always hurried in the deepest parts of us, it's really hard to stop, rest, and be quiet. It's hard to let our minds wander and be patient, but much of serving God, and much of other cultures, are filled with natural places of pause. Wanting to escape will happen especially when we're in a new place with new people and missing faces or activities from home. Instead of the weight of figuring out what to do, it's easier to pull out our phones. We might also be tempted because we don't want to “miss out” on things that happen while we're away.

Social media is especially addictive because it lacks the “stop” triggers that are normally present at the end of a newspaper or an article. We can end up scrolling endlessly, spending more time on things we actually value less. If we value being present and engaged, and we know this is healthy, how can we set good boundaries on our screen time/social media while on the field?

These are personal convictions, not mandates. We encourage prayerfully considering this, inviting accountability, and creating a new rhythm for your time on the field. The biggest argument against posting a bunch is not saying “no” to the “evils” of social media, but a better “yes” to being aware and present. When we do this, we choose deep conversations, richer relationships, more intimacy with our team(s), and better personal tools as we learn to engage in awkward, difficult, or new situations. We'll develop longer attention spans, allowing space for creativity. We desire, most of all, for you to be healthy, to use social media as a tool, but to know how to connect and be present.

Here are some rules as you think about using this tool to share and connect with others:

EXAMINE MOTIVATION

Ask questions like: “Why am I posting this?” “How does it make me look?” “Is this an accurate picture of the local culture or church?” “What story does this communicate about the local culture or church?” “Who does this honor?” This helps identify unhealthy motivations for posting. If you’re still unsure, sleep on it or take a few hours to consider it further.

PICK THE HERO

The more we can highlight local ministries and heroes, the better. Your photos can tell the story of local church members or missionaries who are doing long, faithful, and sometimes unseen work, or who are stepping out boldly in faith in their community. This is an opportunity to not use social media as it’s often used—a platform to make much of ourselves—and instead, honor others serving the Lord or even call for prayer for those we partner with.

USE A POST TO TEACH OR BREAK STEREOTYPES

Use a post as a teaching tool about missions or culture, especially when it broadens perspective. In the DR, a post sharing about the local church leading in zeal and listening to the Holy Spirit could give better perspective of the Majority World Church. A photo of a typical after-church meal may reveal the beauty of collectivist culture blended with the Church. Glimpses of “real” ministry are helpful for people—especially elevating relational ministry and listening over projects and tasks.

CALL FOR PRAYER

Social media can be a tool to unite if we choose to use it that way. Prayer is a great uniter. We may get to see immediate impact because of prayer or it could be an ongoing situation that we choose to stand in faith with those in the midst of it—regardless of whether we stick around to see results. Sharing a need, on your team or from the local church, can unite brothers and sisters around the world in prayer. Faith is multiplied as we join together to pray.

DON’T SHAME OR PICK A FIGHT

Never use social media to shame or call out. Online conversation can easily dissolve into arguments. We forget people are behind online accounts, and hurt follows. You may be experiencing convictions or new insights, perhaps into American culture, during your time away. Creating a post intended to “jolt” everyone to your new reality may cause them to bunker down more in their way of thinking. People tend to have reactionary responses when engaging over the Internet. These conversations are best had in person. Social media is not a tool to change the opinions of others.

IF YOU DO ANYTHING, JUST DON’T DO THIS

Avoid posting pictures of [most often white] Americans with underprivileged people for the sake of a “like.” This narrative is so perpetuated online that avoiding it is most helpful. We understand you may build relationships with awesome kids during your time. You can both take and save photos for yourself, but if you’re choosing just a few photos to tell the story, these may get lost in the noise of typical missions trip photos.



Sample Support Letter

Hi _____!

I know you've probably gotten a million of these types of letters before. It can feel routine to ask for financial and prayer support for a missions trip. In my conversations with Envision, however, I'm realizing this trip might be a bit different.

This missions trip is not primarily about changing my life. While I hope that happens, it's not why I'm going. This trip is not just about me. This trip is not about cool before and after photos. I may share exciting stories with you, but I know the trip is not about doing stuff, a task list, or the number of conversions that happen while I'm there. This trip is not about making me look good, or to supply a new Facebook profile picture of me with people in an underprivileged city. I know some trips look like this, but that isn't the story I want to tell.

Here is what I'm learning: God is on the move. He has been for a long time (forever!), and honestly, He doesn't need me. I am excited to be invited to see what He's doing, to listen to people who actually live there, to experience the local church. The ministries we're going to help with are happening all the time, not just when we're there. We have local leaders who will be teaching and discipling us. I am excited to learn from them, hear stories, and worship God in a new way.

I want to honor _____ culture. A lot of times when we take trips, we come in looking like the hero. But the truth is, God is already on the move, raising up His Church in _____. I am excited to learn from them and be a part of Kingdom work. But, I'm learning that ministry isn't always glamorous, and God moves in everyday faithfulness. It might not always be exciting, but God is at work.

I need partners who can do this with me. That's why I wrote to you. I don't want this trip to be a one-time event. This is a step in my own discipleship process, and I need people who not only support me financially, but who can help me process what I learn and see what to do next. I need prayer, not just during my time there, but also as I prepare to go and come back home. I want to learn how to apply this trip to my normal, back-home life, too, and I would love your help with this.

If you would like to support me, you can contribute financially by going to _____. I would also love your prayers as I prepare and go. I'll be in touch as I'm there and when I come back with lessons learned and stories of what God did. Thank you for considering!



Whole Mission, Whole Life

If you have ever been part of a meaningful cross-cultural experience, you have probably wondered afterwards, “Now, how do I live here in light of what I learned there?” This is a challenging question. We do not want these to be isolated experiences in our Christian walk. We hope and pray that your trip merely serves to be a continuation of a life on mission, but we know that is easier said than done.

There is something about the missions mentality that is hard to translate into a true way of life. It is convicting to realize the disparity between who we are on the “field” and who we are at home. Why is it harder to be a light in our own cities than in Indonesia or inner-city Chicago? Why do practices that come easily for us there, like prayer and Bible study, end up being difficult habits in “real life?” Why do we seem to have more boldness and passion for the lost when we cross a border than when we cross the street?

We all know that nothing magical happens when we hop on a plane. We are not instantly transformed into a fearless communicators of the gospel. Yet, we have seen the Holy Spirit ministering in and through us on foreign soil or in new cities in ways we rarely experience at home. If He is the same everywhere, and if He lives in us regardless of where we are, what are we missing *here* that we seem to have *there*? Here is a list of possible answers:

A SENSE OF URGENCY

A trip has a definite start and end date. We know we won’t be there forever, and we don’t want to waste a single day. We take every opportunity and “make the most of” our time.

THE NECESSITY OF SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

Since we are constantly pouring ourselves out, we must continually be receiving and hearing from the Lord. We know that our daily ministry, relationships, and well-being are directly dependent on our time spent in prayer, worship, and Scripture study. It’s non-negotiable.

DECREASED DISTRACTIONS

We don’t have the same responsibilities on our trip that we did at home. Whether this is chores, school-work, jobs, etc., we are one-minded for the purpose of ministry this week. We aren’t bombarded with a hundred things on our to-do list or our normal running around.

CONSTANT COMMUNITY

We do ministry in the context of a team that we are often around 12 hours a day. There is built-in (if not forced) accountability, vulnerability, forgiveness, and iron-sharpening-iron-ness. We must actually *be* the Church for one another, sometimes because there is no other church.

AN EXPECTATION TO SEE GOD MOVE

We enter our trips and our new environment with a heightened sense of anticipation, asking, “What is God going to do today?” We more readily submit ourselves to His plan, actively look for Him, and jump to join Him at work.

PURPOSEFUL RELATIONSHIPS

Our conversations, even with new acquaintances, quickly dive into heart and soul matters. Though brief, we want our interactions to be meaningful and intentional. We bravely take opportunities to share hope with our new friends and pray that they would follow Jesus.

THE DESPERATION OF THE LOST AND THE LEAST

Poverty, spiritual bondage, and injustice surround us, hanging heavy on our hearts—more visibly than back at home. We are freshly aware of all that is not right in the world. God’s passion for the lost and broken becomes ours, and we cry out for rescue and redemption.

DAILY SERVICE AND SACRIFICE

We do not expect it to be easy. We embrace difficulties and gladly take up the challenge to tirelessly love and serve. We give ourselves away every day, despite exhaustion and weakness, then get up and do it again. We count the cost and find the sacrifice is more than worth it!

Yes, we lose some of these things as we return home. Distractions resume their normal level of interruption. We miss our team we served so closely with and did life with. Spiritual battles that seemed so evident are often more subtle in our Western context and require a greater level of sensitivity. The motivation of a start and end date can be lost in the mundane rhythms of normal life.

We don’t want to downplay the loss of particular ways of life on the field—there are certainly things we need to grieve when we leave. But too, a lot of these things simply need to be translated to our home context. The truth is, mission is a *whole life thing*—this is about a *lifestyle* change, not an *environment* change. Ask for the Holy Spirit’s help with this, and the help of mentors, close friends, and your church.

Who are the broken around you that you’re not seeing?

What distractions do you need to cut out of your life to be more wholly focused?

Pray for increased expectation to see God move.

Create a culture among your friends and family of being on mission together. Pray together.

It’s not going to be easy, but we all know that it’s worth it. The small taste we’ve received during our trip can be the motivation that gets us slowly but surely moving towards a lifestyle of mission at home.



Next Steps

“Execution eats innovation for breakfast.” This means: ideas are great, but unless you put feet to these, nothing will really change. Here are some practical ways to keep the learning process going after your short-term trip:

JOURNAL THROUGH YOUR TRIP

What were your expectations going into the trip? How was the trip different? What was good? What was hard? How did God show up in ways you didn’t expect? What did you learn from the local church? What friendships will be important as you return home?

TALK WITH A MENTOR

Using what you’ve journaled through, connect with a mentor or spiritual leader, preferably someone you already have relationship with or who was on the trip with you. Open up your life to them and give them permission to speak openly, to challenge, to encourage, and to help you walk out next steps. Accountability and mutual encouragement are key when it comes to applying what you’ve learned.

SERVE AT YOUR LOCAL CHURCH

You may have noticed a new knack or passion as you served at your Envision site. Maybe you discovered that you’re pretty good with kids or that you love interceding on behalf of individuals. Join a ministry at your church that coincides with these gifts to continue growing in your stewardship of these. Consider taking a spiritual gifts test as well!

READ A BOOK

Stories stick with us. Long after the trip is over, the stories you’ve heard from long-term workers, or the ones you experienced, will be what lives on in your memory. Add to this by picking up a biography of a missionary, or challenge yourself with a book on cross-cultural or urban ministry. Better yet, recruit a friend from the trip to read with you!

ASK THE HOLY SPIRIT

Spend some time in prayer asking the Lord to reveal anything He wants you to continue walking out after your trip, big or small. Oftentimes, we mistake the hardest thing for the best thing. Be careful not to confuse this, but it may also be a big step the Lord is asking you to take! Write it down, pray about it, invite others into it, and see what the Lord does. Better to be faithful in what God is asking you to do rather than faithful in a myriad of other things that distract us from it.

Next Steps on Mission

We know some of you will feel the call or tug to continue to move forward in mission—whether that’s in an urban setting here in the U.S. or overseas—and we have lots of options that could serve as a great next step for you on mission.

GO BACK AS AN INTERN

An internship is a great next step for someone interested in cross-cultural ministry or if you simply felt you didn’t have enough time! Envision interns serve 1-11 months at an Envision site. This program is all about developing ministry readiness, discipleship values, cross-cultural agility, leadership, and spiritual depth.

To learn more or apply, visit www.weareenvision.com/internships.

SERVE FOR TWO YEARS AS AN ENVISION RESIDENT

A residency is the next level of commitment beyond an internship. Envision residents serve two years at an Envision site. The program is cohort-based, meaning you will be going through four semesters of material and training as a group with other residents serving around the world. This program is all about developing ministry readiness, discipleship values, cross-cultural agility, leadership, and spiritual depth.

To learn more or apply, visit www.weareenvision.com/residency.

aXcess

aXcess is one of the four structures of Alliance Missions, along with Envision. aXcess provides a more traditional pathway to long-term service with Alliance Missions through their Clergy Track and Vocational Track. Both tracks involve the establishment and development of a network of national churches, albeit through slightly different pathways.

To learn more, visit www.cmalliance.org/serve/international-work.

CAMA

CAMA is also one of the four structures of Alliance Missions. CAMA is a community of compassion-driven individuals and churches joining together to serve the world’s poor and communities devastated by disasters. They do this through developing partnerships, doing relief work, and focusing on community and people development.

To learn more, visit camaservices.org.

marketplace ministries

marketplace ministries (mm) is the last of the four structures of Alliance Missions. mm is an association of C&MA professionals employed internationally in secular cross-cultural situations. They use business development, medical care, teaching, and other ways to enter creative access countries and build a gospel presence while bringing tangible flourishing to communities.

To learn more, visit www.joinmm.com.



Questions?

Reach out to us on our website at www.weareenvision.com
or follow us on social media *@WeAreEnvision*



If you have any questions, don't hesitate to reach out to our trips coordinator.
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