



# **ORIENTATION MANUAL FOR MISSIONS TEAMS**

# TABLE of CONTENTS

## **SECTION 1 | PURPOSE OF BUILD THE VILLAGE**

- 1.1 GENERAL
- 1.2 APPLICATION PROCESS
- 1.3 SELECTION CRITERIA
- 1.4 ESTIMATED LENGTH OF TRIP
- 1.5 FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

## **SECTION 2 | ADVANCED TRAVEL & PREPARATION**

- 2.1 PASSPORT
- 2.2 VISA
- 2.3 MONEY
- 2.4 MEDICAL INFORMATION
- 2.5 TRAVEL PREPARATION
- 2.6 ARRIVAL INFORMATION

## **SECTION 3 | LUGGAGE**

- 3.1 GENERAL INFORMATION
- 3.2 GENERAL PACKING TIPS

## **SECTION 4 | SPIRITUAL PREPARATION AND PRAYER SUPPORT**

- 4.1 SPIRITUAL PREPARATION
- 4.2 ORGANIZING PRAYER SUPPORT

## **SECTION 5 | IN-COUNTRY CHURCH & COMMUNITY**

- 5.1 WITNESSING
- 5.2 CHURCH
- 5.3 GIFTS

## **SECTION 6 | CROSS CULTURAL INFORMATION**

- 6.1 COMMON COURTESIES
- 6.2 CULTURE SHOCK
- 6.3 PHOTOS
- 6.4 OPPOSITE GENDER
- 6.5 RELATIONSHIPS WITH NATIONALS
- 6.6 TIPS FOR SPEAKING THROUGH AN INTERPRETER

## **SECTION 7 | SAFETY & SECURITY**

## **SECTION 8 | LANGUAGE TIPS**

## **SECTION 1 - PURPOSE OF COMMUNITIES OF GRACE** **INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS**

**1.1 - GENERAL** Communities of Grace International is a global organization whose mission is to glorify Jesus Christ and make Him known through personal evangelism, discipleship, and providing theological education. From our commitment to reaching the world for Christ we consider a holistic approach to meeting the specific needs for the community. This is achieved through establishing district village hubs that will assist in helping indigenous peoples meet their spiritual and physical needs.

Communities of Grace International will establish village hubs built around a community church for centralized theological training, an orphanage to assist in the parentless, a community school to educate the most disadvantaged, a medical facility to care for the sick, clean water sources for the thirsty, and a community library to help bring the world to their village.

The placement of the village is an investment in the community we are reaching. After seeing peoples come to Christ and establishing a disciplined church, village development is evaluated and proposed. The goal of a district village hub is to share the love of Christ through helping to meet the needs of the community as well as developing the spiritual needs of believers.

### **1.2 – APPLICATION PROCESS**

The Communities of Grace International Operations Office accepts applications throughout the entire year. Group Leaders should submit the group application, signed copies of the Character & Policy Statement and Release Form from all participants 30 days prior to the expected departure date. A \$25 administrative fee for each person traveling is also required at this time. Please send these items to PO Box 37475 Raleigh 27627. Application forms may be downloaded from [www.gocogi.org](http://www.gocogi.org) and checks should be made payable to Communities of Grace International.

### **1.3 – SELECTION CRITERIA**

A volunteer should be a member of a local church and have a testimony of professing Jesus Christ as Savior.

### **1.4 - ESTIMATED LENGTH OF TRIP**

A volunteer mission trip is normally for a period of 10-14 days but can vary based on the focus of a trip.

### **1.5 – FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS**

Participants will work with travel agents and insurance providers to make the necessary trip arrangements. All money required from these outside companies will be due based on their payment terms and standards. It is the responsibility of the participants to pay these vendors directly. All lodging, ground transportation, and meals while in country will be coordinated between a Communities of Grace International staff member and the Group Leader. COGI will provide an estimate of expenses for the group's travel. The funding to address these fees will be sent to the COGI at PO Box 37475 Raleigh 27627 at least 10 days prior to their designated travel date. Do not overlook the extra expenses such as passport fees, visa fees, shots, food while en route, excess baggage fees, sightseeing, and souvenirs.

## **SECTION 2 – ADVANCED TRAVEL & PREPARATION**

*It is impossible to anticipate all circumstances and situations, but this information will help you to better prepare for your journey.*

### **2.1 – PASSPORT**

You must have a valid passport to travel outside the United States. Your passport must be valid for a minimum of 6 months after the date of your return from the field. If your passport expires within 6 months of your trip return date, please get it renewed. Keep your passport and a copy of your passport on your person at all times. If you do not currently have a passport please begin the process to obtain a passport immediately. More information is available on the web – [www.travel.state.gov/](http://www.travel.state.gov/) (click on passports). Each person should carry a copy of their passport in a separate location from the original, an emergency list that shows your name, medications that you are currently taking, allergies to medications, blood type, family doctor contact information, and family member contact information. The list should contain any information that could be important in case of accident or sudden illness. Make 3 copies of your passport and emergency contact list. Place a copy in your carry on, keep one on you, and leave one with a relative.

### **2.2 – VISA**

Frequently, a country will require a current VISA for you to enter their country. You may find the VISA application form and the information needed to complete the application online. For example, if traveling to Kenya use a search engine such as Google to type Kenya, VISA application. Please return the necessary items in a timely manner to the address provided on the website. Check your passport; it should have at least one blank page between pages 7-21 for the VISA. If it does not, you should have pages added to the passport or consider getting a new one. Please have your VISA process completed 30 days prior to travel.

### **2.3 – MONEY**

**Travel Money:** When considering how much cash to take for miscellaneous expenses and souvenirs, \$200 is an average recommended amount. You may consider carrying one credit card and keep it in a secure place with your cash. Usually there is time during the trip for shopping and purchasing souvenirs. Some stores may take Visa and MasterCard. It is important to have the contact number and the card number in case it's lost or stolen and one needs to cancel the card.

**Currency Exchange:** US Currency is easily exchanged if they are the new style (larger image) and have no tears, worn spots, or writing on them. Foreign countries frequently will not accept bills in any condition that are older than 2004. It is recommended that you bring either 20's or 100's due to the ease of exchange, the larger the bill the better the exchange. Be sure to order fresh U.S. currency from your bank in ample time prior to your departure date. Whatever you do, do not exchange money on the street or from any individual (bellboy, waiter, etc.). When you exchange money you must show identification (a copy of your passport will do). Always ask for a currency exchange receipt. You may be asked for it when you change your money back into dollars. Money should be kept in a money belt or safe pouch and kept on the team member's person at all times.

**Communities of Grace International Financial Gift Policy:** Money should not be given to nationals, translators, or other people, without the expressed permission of the team coordinator. Communities of Grace International normally provides guidance on modest individual gifts to be given on the last day for the nationals who have helped the team. Be wise in giving any gift. Many see ALL Americans as rich. Giving a large gift will cause jealousy or even animosity and is not sanctioned by Communities of Grace International. If someone does ask, please refer them to their trip coordinator. You will be able to observe needs. If you feel led of the Lord to respond to a need, please ask the Trip Coordinator for guidance. Your heart will be touched by need. Recognition that you cannot meet every need will help you deal with this issue. The greatest gift you give is the salvation that comes from understanding and accepting the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

## **2.4 - MEDICAL INFORMATION**

**Medical Facilities/Insurance:** Outside the United States medical care may be limited. Basic medical supplies may be scarce. Doctors and hospitals may expect immediate cash payment for health services. U. S. medical insurance is not always valid outside the United States. Therefore, each person traveling must have travel insurance. We recommend two insurance companies; both are listed on our website – [www.buildthevillage.org](http://www.buildthevillage.org). **Required Immunizations:** It is recommended that you contact your local health department on for advice pertaining to immunization based on your country of travel. Volunteers with special health problems (diabetes, heart conditions, respiratory problems, allergies, etc.) should be aware that emergency care may not be available. They should be prepared to care for themselves in an emergency.

## **2.5 - TRAVEL PREPARATION**

- During the trip, you will need several documents readily available (e.g., passport, tickets, shot record, etc.).
- If you wear glasses, be sure to bring your prescription and carry it with your medical records.
- It is recommended that you pack one day's supply of clothing and all prescription medications in your carry-on luggage in case your luggage is delayed or you experience an unexpected overnight delay. If bags are lost, the trip will still continue and you could be without your bag the duration of your stay.
- If the airline delays your travel, it is usually required that the airline take care of all stopover expenses including hotel, meals, and telegram/telephone calls to advise of change in arrival schedule.
- Before you leave, check with the travel agency regarding delayed or missed flights. If you miss your plane, the airlines will place you on standby status for the next available flight. If it is the airlines fault, you may have to insist that they provide for any lodging, meal needs, transportation, and general expenses.
- Arrive at the airport at least 2 hours before departure for international flights. Use the buddy system and take turns watching for each other's luggage during your time at the airports.
- Pack sufficient snacks in your checked baggage. You will enjoy them during your stay. Pack enough in your carry-on luggage for the travel portion of the trip. Food is expensive in airports and the snacks come in handy. In the summer be aware that some candy and snacks are heat sensitive. Mixed nuts and "nabs" are good.
- Major problems do arise from time to time with volunteers placing their plane ticket or paperwork in the seat pockets of the airplane or other modes of transportation. Please have a

buddy check after getting on and off the plane, bus, or train. It happens, even to the most experienced traveler – please double check and if in doubt, check again.

- Always check the baggage tickets and tags to insure your bags are checked all the way through to the final destination.
- When packing, one may consider packing clothes and shoes they would like to leave behind. Good used clothing is great gifts for Nationals. Keep in mind that most travelers over pack. For a 14 day visit a person can get by with one piece of luggage. Large amounts of luggage will require the rental of a vehicle to transport the luggage which will in turn add more expenses to the team.

## **2.6 - ARRIVAL INFORMATION**

You will go through the following areas before arriving where the Communities of Grace International in-country host will meet you:

**Passport Control:** Before you get to the baggage claim area you will pass through passport control. Often the lines are long and it may take a while. Be patient. Follow the signs and directions. The officials speak some English and will ask for your passport. Answer all their questions and comply with reasonable requests. Passport Control is not a problem unless you have lost your passport. Your business in the country is that of a tourist (“pleasure”).

**Baggage Claim:** Use of luggage carts are usually free (you may find some abandoned ones sitting around). This is where teamwork is important. Unless you really need help from the attendants, tell them “No.” If luggage is missing, before leaving the baggage area go to the lost luggage office in the baggage claim area and report it. You will need your baggage claim ticket, which is usually stapled to your plane ticket and an address and telephone number where you are staying. Usually missing luggage arrives the next day. Young men may try to help you with your luggage. They will be persistent and will try to help even when you refuse. Just tell them “NO” and continue to tell them “NO!” Help other team members watch their bags and gather luggage.

**Customs:** It is usually best if the team proceeds through customs together. You have nothing to declare, unless you are carrying more than \$10,000 in cash. You must declare any amounts over \$10,000 (Refer to the “Safety & Security” in section 7 of this manual). If the customs officer wants to check your bags, they will motion for you to come over. If you are asked about the contents of your bags, just say that it is all personal effects for your trip. Be cordial and cooperate. There have been very few problems with teams entering the country, even with large amounts of luggage.

**After Customs:** You will most likely see your in-country contact. If not, stay calm, be patient, and do not get a taxi or accept any offers of help (except from missionaries). Remember to watch your luggage as you would in any major airport! There will be many people and some amount of confusion as you exchange greetings and make your way out of the terminal. Watch your small bags, purses, and valuables. The restrooms are usually marked “W.C.” (Water Closet), or simply “Toilet.” Look carefully at the door before entering. In some cities, you may discover that there is not a separate room for men and women.

## **SECTION 3 - LUGGAGE**

### 3.1 - GENERAL INFORMATION

**Airlines are not all the same:** Check with your travel agent or airline about their specific requirements. If you are changing airlines overseas, you should check the requirements for both carriers. Some overseas carriers have a stricter luggage policy than others. Sometimes they do not allow as much in weight or size for checked or carry-on luggage as U.S. carriers. Allowances differ based on international and domestic tickets. The U.S. baggage standard per ticket is 2 checked bags; **maximum 70 pounds each**, depending on the carrier and destination. Check with the airline but normally one carry-on bag weighing up to 18 pounds is also allowed. It must fit under the seat or in the overhead bin. If the bag will not fit in the overhead compartment or under the seat, they will require you to check it before you board.

**Excess Pieces of Baggage:** Any baggage, which exceeds the free allowance, will be considered excess and will be assessed a charge based on the destination. If you are making connections from the U.S. to your final international destination, you should check your baggage all the way to the destination. If you voluntarily decide to stop over at any point outside the United States in route, the domestic baggage allowance of 44 pounds per person will be applied.

**Payment for Excess Pieces:** You must pay the charge for the excess pieces at the point of origin. Allow extra time for this task. Personal checks usually are not accepted. You will need sufficient funds in cash. In certain countries you may be able to use traveler's checks or a credit card. Typically, the charges vary from \$75.00 to \$200.00 per piece, depending on destination and the carrier. Be very careful when you pack.

**Mark Your Bags:** Be sure that each bag has a nametag that is securely fastened to the bag. The tag should include your name, stateside address, and telephone number. Use tag holders which cover the name tag and are not easily opened. Guard against a stranger easily securing your home address as they watch you leave the country. Mark your bags so that they are easily recognized. When you are in the luggage pickup area, many bags may look like yours.

### 3.2 - GENERAL PACKING TIPS

**Packing for the Trip:** When packing for a mission trip, most travelers pack too much. Packing too much will be a hindrance to you and others on the trip. Often the hotel rooms are not as large as those in the U.S. and when sharing the room with a roommate, large overloaded suitcases become a burden. If you stay in a home, the large bags become a real problem.

- Passport/visa
- Airline tickets and itinerary
- Depending on your final location, pack only what you can handle by yourself.
- Do not pack those four books that you have been hoping to read. You won't have time to read them on your trip. Bring one in your carry-on to read on the airplane and during layovers as you travel.
- You will need your smaller size Bible, perhaps a devotional book, and a journal.
- Pack a small battery operated travel alarm clock.
- Do not pack expensive or large jewelry. It is best to plan on not wearing jewelry.

- Do not pack four pairs of shoes. One good pair of walking or athletic shoes for activities and travel, and one pair of universal, casual / dress shoes will be adequate. Add shower flip-flops and the washable, sock type house slippers if you would like to.
- Light jacket or sweat shirt.
- Travel poncho, raincoat or small umbrella.
- Washcloths are not normally available in other countries, except in more expensive hotels. If you need them, bring them.
- In certain circumstances you may wish that you had brought one bath towel or a terrycloth bathrobe that can also serve as a towel.
- A small size Deep Woods Off, mosquito repellent, or your favorite brand with DEET.
- Small first aid items
- 3-4 oz. small baggies
- Small flashlight.
- Fanny-pack or backpack. While traveling, you will need a small bag, such as a backpack for carrying your Bible, witnessing tracts, bottled water, camera, and moist towelettes.
- Extra batteries for camera, CD player, tape recorder, etc. Do not forget the film, battery charger for video and digital camera, camera strap, camera carrying case.
- Address list. Email list. Emergency contact list.
- Sun glasses.
- Extra shoe laces.
- Snacks

Remember, travel light. Some team members on previous trips have taken older clothes and an old suitcase to be left behind. These are normally given to the host pastors on the last day. Your Trip Coordinator will give you guidance in this matter.

### **Toiletries:**

- Pack an ample supply of the personal size facial tissue packages. These will be handy for napkins, disposable handkerchiefs, and toilet paper when not available. A travel pack of handy wipes (baby wipes) may come in handy.
- A 2 fl. oz. bottle of antibacterial hand sanitizer should last two weeks. A small size bottle can fit easily into your backpack or fanny pack.
- Pack medication only in your carry-on. Pack one and a half times your planned need of any prescription medication.
- Vitamins
- Over the counter medications and first-aid supplies such as sunburn ointment, Band-Aids, eyewash, Benadryl, motion sickness tablets, Pepto-Bismol, Imodium A-D, Tylenol / Tylenol PM, rubbing alcohol, allergy/sinus medication, cough drops, Dramamine, etc.
- You may want to ask your doctor to help you put together a medical kit for the team. He/she can include a couple of good prescriptions for serious problems with nausea, diarrhea, etc.
- Bath soap, shampoo/conditioner, comb, hair brush, etc.
- Sun-block lotion
- Skin conditioners, hand lotion, body lotion, etc.



- Female sanitary items
- Small hand held mirror
- Toothbrush, toothpaste, floss, mouth wash
- Roll of toilet paper
- Disposable razors, shaving cream, after-shave lotion
- Nail clippers, tweezers, and small scissors
- Cotton balls, Q-tips
- Contact lens care kit (if applicable).
- Visine or drops that relieve dryness in your eyes
- Ambien 10mg (1 tablet at night if needed for sleep) – This will help you get on a normal schedule faster.

**Clothing:** Clothing needs will vary greatly depending on the season of the year, area of the country, and the planned projects for ministry. Never hesitate to ask the COGI Trip Coordinator who you are working with as you prepare for your trip. For proper church attire please refer to the Church and Community portion of this manual. Please – no tight fitting, revealing clothing or shorts for women.

## **SECTION 4: SPIRITUAL PREPARATION AND PRAYER SUPPORT**

### **4.1 - SPIRITUAL PREPARATION**

Spiritual preparation is imperative. You may have seen the slides and heard the testimonies of those who went on other mission trips, but nothing completely prepares you for the intensity of what you will experience there. You will be shocked by the physical and spiritual needs you will encounter. You may feel shocked by the different foods, smells, customs, and languages. You may have to deal with limited bathroom facilities, little privacy, insects, crowded vehicles, poor roads, and undesirable accommodations. If you have not spent adequate time with God before you go, you will be overwhelmed when you get there. Depend on God. Do not trust in your own abilities.

You cannot wait until the last minute to prepare spiritually. If you are not a spiritually sensitive and mature person in the U.S., you will not automatically become one when you cross the border into another country. Spiritual preparation takes time. Oswald Chambers wrote in *My Utmost for His Highest*: “If you have not been worshiping as occasion serves, when you get into [mission] work you will not only be useless yourself, but a tremendous hindrance to those who are associated with you.”

#### **Follow these tips for spiritual preparation:**

- Maintain a growing, personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
- Practice the spiritual disciplines of Bible study, prayer, and church attendance.
- Pray about every aspect of your trip.
- Enlist prayer partners.
- Ask God to make you sensitive to spiritual needs around you and to make you bold in your witness.
- Keep a journal of your thoughts and experiences to map your spiritual journey.

**Quiet Time with God:** It is important that team members have a daily quiet time with God, reading scripture, daily devotionals, and praying.

**Evangelism Training:** Evangelism training is a must for all team members. Each team member should know the same evangelism approach and have an opportunity to practice the method before leaving for the trip. Be sensitive to any instruction given by the local missionaries, as they are most familiar with effective techniques.

**Personal Testimony:** The word “testimony” is used here because it is a word that includes the possibility of sharing a long process in your Christian walk. However, please consider referring to your profession of faith as “My salvation experience.” As you write and later share your testimony, you may want to answer the following questions: What was your life like before following Christ? How did you realize you were lost? How did you become a Christian? What does being a Christian mean to you in day-to-day life?

#### **4.2 - ORGANIZING PRAYER SUPPORT**

**Prayer will determine the success of your trip.** If a team is going to be prepared and honor the Father with their effort, they must seek Him in prayer. Please enlist prayer partners to pray for God to show you His will, and as a result, the team will be better prepared spiritually and physically to do His will.

**Prayer Support:** Prayer partners could include coworkers, friends, neighbors, Sunday School class members, members of the congregation, and family. Be creative when enlisting prayer partners. Create prayer cards, bookmarks, prayer calendars, etc.

**Prayer:** As the team begins to form, make prayer the focus of your meetings. Pray for God’s leading during the meeting, in decisions, for understanding of the mission, and for willing and submissive hearts. Offer the opportunity for prayer partners to meet together in small groups and pray for the team.

**Personal Journal:** Team members are encouraged to keep a journal of their walk with God as they prepare, go, and return from the trip. List prayer requests, concerns, and answered prayer. Write down significant scriptures.

The team is encouraged to write about events as well as what God is teaching them (including their response). Answer the question, “What does He want me to do next?” God will use your journal to reveal something of Himself and something about yourself. The team is encouraged to record these moments of inspiration while they are fresh on their hearts.

### **SECTION 5 – IN-COUNTRY CHURCH & COMMUNITY**

You will be in-country for a short time and hopefully have an experience that will bless you forever. Do not criticize the culture or how things are done. Do not tell them how you do it in America unless you are asked, and then keep it simple and return the focus to them. It is your opportunity to learn all about their culture and their life. Your purpose is to share the Gospel and

exhibit the presence of Christ. Please represent God and America well. Things will not always be convenient or comfortable, but God is sufficient.

### **5.1 – WITNESSING**

Be sincere when you are witnessing. Express what Jesus has done in your life and what He means to you. Then continue as the Holy Spirit leads. When speaking of spiritual things, the nationals will not understand the humor that some Americans blend into their testimony. The national believers take their faith and their Lord very seriously. Avoid using colloquial humor.

Witnessing varies in every country and with every people group and person. When sharing your faith tell them what Jesus means to you and ask them what Jesus means to them. Then follow the Holy Spirit's lead. God has a purpose for you being there. Please know how to share your faith and understand what you believe well enough that you do not have to follow a word-by-word format.

Do not use church words. For you to say, "I was born again" or "I was saved", may confuse most people. "I accepted Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior" will be more meaningful.

### **5.2 – CHURCH**

As an American, they will overlook your dress, but they will appreciate you for trying to respect their customs. Your ministry will have more power if you dress respectfully.

In some churches, men and women sit on opposite sides of the sanctuary. The nationals are very accommodating and may ask you to sit together in the front. Graciously accept their offer. Men who will preach are usually expected to wear a white dress shirt and tie. Be comfortable and share what the Lord places on your heart.

Pray as you walk through the streets and villages. Pray for prepared hearts (yours and theirs) and for opportunities. Pray for the courage to follow God's leading and for opportunities to share the Gospel. Pray as the Holy Spirit leads you to pray.

Refer questions on doctrinal issues or theological statements to the nationals or missionaries working with you.

Treat your Bible with respect. Do not slam it down or handle it in a way that could be perceived as disrespectful. Bibles are not plentiful in other countries and therefore should be cared for. They contain the Word of God and should be treated with respect. Do not ever put your Bible on the floor. Do not put anything on the floor except the soles of your feet.

Do not become involved in ethnic differences. In the villages, do not make fun of the food or the facilities (outdoor toilets, the paper, etc.). Do not use words such as "gross" or "awful." Certain circumstances are part of the everyday life of the people and are not unusual. Your hosts or translators may live in such surroundings or have many relatives that do. Remember to be humble, kind, and sensitive.

### **5.3 – GIFTS**

Please consult your Trip Coordinator for gift suggestions and distribution. Used clothing always makes a great gift.

Please remember DO NOT give any gifts or cash to the residents or employees while visiting an orphanage or foundation unless you have received the approval of the administrator. When in doubt, ask the in-country host.

No money, tips, etc. should be given to Nationals (interpreters, workers, pastors, etc.) without prior approval of your Trip Coordinator who will seek guidance from the COGI representative or the in-country host, if present.

Unless the gift is given with the full cooperation of the COGI person in charge, your monetary gift could keep the translator from being used again by the COGI mission staff.

## **SECTION 6 - CROSS CULTURAL INFORMATION**

### **6.1 - COMMON COURTESIES**

You are going as a member of a team. It is crucial that you show common courtesies both to your fellow Americans and to your hosts.

- Be on time for meals, devotionals, and departures.
- Attend all meetings.
- No matter who you are, what you've done, or how many mission trips you've been on, be graciously submissive to your leader.
- Do not complain!
- Respect the needs of others for privacy, silence, and sleep.
- Do not criticize the local food or customs.
- Avoid comments such as, "We don't do it that way in...."
- Use common sense in male-female relationships. Avoid any conduct that may be offensive to the nationals. Open displays of affection between males and females (even if married) can be offensive in other cultures.
- When visiting a strict no-smoking, no-drinking policy is to be observed.
- Please use your best manners and do not be loud and out of control. This is also good to remember while walking on the street and riding public transportation.
- Be polite; remove your hat or cap when indoors. When ministering don't wear mirrored sun glasses.

### **6.2 - CULTURE SHOCK**

Culture refers to the total way of life of particular groups of people. Culture is the ideas, customs, traditions, language, arts, belief systems, social structures, and norms of a given group of people. You will find life is different from life in the U.S. Be careful not to make a value judgment about culture. Strive to be sensitive to the differences that you will see and experience.

What can be done about culture stress?

- Stay spiritually sharp. An awareness of the reality of God's presence helps us to cope.
- Keep your sense of humor.

- Look for the logical reason things are done as they are. Relax your grip on your own culture. Realize others have adapted and you can too.
- Do not belittle the host culture.
- Focus on relationships with people of your host country. Consciously seek to build a warm relationship with one or more such persons.
- Do not lose faith in yourself, the essential good of your host culture, your mission, and the positive outcome of your experiences

### **6.3 – PHOTOS**

Do bring photos of your family. They will ask you about your spouse, children, grandchildren, fiancé, or sweetheart. Plan ahead and take special pictures for this occasion. Photograph them in front of a wooded area, a beautiful shrub, a waterfall, or looking off a mountaintop. Place them in a small presentation book that you can pass around if asked.

DO NOT take photos with your fine home or new vehicle in the background. Do not bring pictures that document how well you live or how well your home is decorated. Keep it personal. Be sure that all of your photos are of those you love, not of your accumulated abundance. If you show such photos, you will never convince them that you are not wealthy. Help them to understand that your joy (happiness) has its source in Jesus Christ, not because you have no needs.

### **6.4 - OPPOSITE GENDER**

Everyone involved with the American mission team should refrain from entering a room of members of the opposite sex alone. This is even more important when that person is national. Please be aware that one-on-one time together with nationals (outside the group activity setting) is strongly discouraged. Many cultures are quite unlike ours, and what may seem harmless/innocent acts of friendship may be interpreted much differently.

### **6.5 - RELATIONSHIPS WITH NATIONALS**

Nationals are an extremely gracious and friendly people. We are going at their invitation and they will do their best to make us feel at home. Avoid being demanding in any way. You should always compliment them sincerely. Any criticism would be in bad taste. Avoid calling them “natives.” They should be called by their nationality or people group (i.e. Kenyans, Americans, Lebanese) or “Nationals.”

You may be asked for money or gifts (although your interpreters and church leaders will be instructed not to do this). It is okay to politely say, “No, I cannot do that.” Any other response may be taken as a promise to give them something.

Remember always to be kind, never speaking critically to them or where they can overhear your remarks. No matter where you are assigned, words of welcome and greetings are important. When you are in the church, please share greetings from your church in the U.S. to their church. Also, share something about yourself, your family, that you are a born-again Christian, and your relationship with Christ. This gives you credibility and builds a foundation for you to share with them. It is very important to show respect to the nationals; age, for example, is highly respected.

At first you will be struck by the vast gap in the economic levels and conditions between their country and America. In general, people are far poorer than Americans; however, you will soon learn that the nationals are happier and more satisfied with what little they have than Americans with their surplus. Your job is to share Jesus, not to be an economist or a tourist. Relax and enjoy their hospitality and graciousness that puts most of us to shame.

## **6.6 - TIPS FOR SPEAKING THROUGH AN INTERPRETER**

- Go over your Scripture and message with your interpreter before you begin to speak so he or she will know where you are going.
- It is best to let the translator read the Scripture in the language being used rather than using two languages.
- Be brief and to the point.
- Speak clearly and in short phrases.
- Don't use acronyms, alliteration, jokes, or poetry. These usually do not translate well.
- Don't use slang, idioms, or religious jargon.
- Don't refer to elements familiar in our culture but not in theirs—malls, etc.
- Don't use long sentences.
- Don't listen to the translator but rather focus on what you're going to say next.
- Face the people rather than the interpreter when speaking.
- Do not talk about your interpreter. He will find it difficult to talk about himself.
- When preaching, go over carefully with the interpreter how you will give the invitation so mix-ups can be avoided.

**Translators:** If you have questions, ask your in-country host or your translator. The translators are there for you. If you are not sure, ask them first. We want your visit to be pleasant and meaningful. Be careful not to use slang words. Although some nationals speak English, they do not always understand what we mean by certain words or phrases and your comment could be misunderstood as an insult.

You and the translators are going to form a binding relationship based on your dependency on them to help you through many situations. Be careful with your emotions! Be considerate of their emotions. Do not promise anything.

## **SECTION 7 - SAFETY & SECURITY**

Most countries are not any more dangerous than the U.S. You are far less likely to experience physical harm from an individual than you are in the U.S. Theft is what you should guard against. When in the cities or using mass transit systems, obey the same rules that you would anywhere else in the world as you travel. If your possessions are valuable, keep your hands on them or have them well concealed on your person.

Please keep all of your valuable possessions in front of you. DO NOT carry your wallet in your hip pocket. Ladies, shorten your purse straps so that the purse body is closer under your arm. Move your backpack to the front of you if it contains valuables.

Make sure you know where your passport and airline tickets are at all times.

DO NOT engage in conversation with street kids or beggars or drunkards. That is a specialized ministry and there are agencies and foundations in country that specialize in their care.

DO NOT place your handbag, camera bag, backpack, etc. in the chair next to you at the restaurant. Please do not hang your purse or bags on the chair back or arm, or lay them on the table. Keep them in your lap, or sitting on the floor between your feet, placing one foot through the shoulder strap.

DO NOT take photographs of anyone in a police or military uniform. It is a good idea to ask before taking someone's photograph.

DO NOT photograph buildings with uniformed guards in front of them, not even the American Embassy or Ambassador's home. You will be stopped and the film confiscated... it happens all the time.

DO NOT walk out of the exchange office handling money. Put it away before exiting the area.

DO NOT keep your money in large bundles so that you have to sort through it when you pay. Organize your money by denomination and do not keep it all in one place. Keep at hand only what you anticipate that you will need for that day.

Remember, beware of sidewalk moneychangers. Never stop to talk to anyone asking about making change or exchanging money. Stay in a group of three or more in any scenario, this will likely reduce any security risk. Never walk off by yourself!

On public transportation or in public areas, stay alert and attentive if sudden crowding and pushing occurs. Keep your voices low and avoid drawing attention to you or your group. Keep your hands on your documents and wallet at all times. Do not be afraid unless there is obvious reason. Stay with the group and stay alert.

Stay away from the dogs. Do not fear them. DO NOT feed them. There may be many dogs on the streets in some cities. Do not pet them or call them. If a dog becomes excited and begins to bark, a pack of them can form quickly. Stay away from dogs! If you get bit, we will assume the dog has rabies and treat appropriately.

No mission team members should be outside their hotel/accommodations after dark unless with team members and involved in ministry (occasionally a team is late arriving back at the hotel). Never go out alone, especially at night. Even when in a group, stay in well lighted areas at night. Do not do anything to call attention to yourself. Avoid loud laughter and talk, and pay attention to the surroundings. A group should include a translator or in-country host.

PLEASE DO NOT be afraid. The above is to help you avoid the possibility of having difficulty. In any country as a tourist, a thief or scam artist will target you. Most nationals think all Americans are rich. That makes you a likely target if a thief is around.

Please use caution with your camera, purse, backpack, or anything that could be perceived as being valuable or containing something of value. Placing such temptation in front of someone, including in church, may be more than they can handle. You do not want to tempt a child, teenager, or adult to take something that has been placed where opportunity prevails.

**Water:** Do not drink any water unless it's from a bottle you opened. When you are going out for the day—or even half-day—carry bottled water with you. It is very important to drink plenty of liquids (liquids containing caffeine do not count). It is easy to become dehydrated. Be sure to remember to use bottled water for brushing your teeth. Remember, too, that you may have come to a considerably higher altitude. Shortness of breath and fatigue may be expected at first.

Tea or coffee (because the water has been boiled) is safe to drink, as is any bottled soft drink. If you are invited for a meal in a home, it is all right to eat any hot cooked food. Do not eat fresh vegetables or fruit unless you peel it yourself. Be careful of lettuce and mayonnaise.

**Clean Hands, Healthy Body:** Because you will be shaking hands with many different people, it is helpful to carry anti-bacterial gel or “wipes” with you to wipe your hands occasionally. You will not be as apt to catch an infection if you do not use your fingers to wipe your eyes. Use a tissue or handkerchief instead. It is wise to wash your hands carefully with soap as soon as you return to your room. Anti-bacterial gel (waterless soap) is very helpful. Bring a small bottle that will fit in your backpack or fanny pack.

## SECTION 8 – LANGUAGE TIPS

Kiswahili, or Swahili as it is popularly known, is the regional language of East Africa. It is a very simple language to learn, but hard to master due to various idioms and dialects (like English.) Unlike English, it is a very phonetic language – most words are consonant, vowel; consonant, vowel type combinations that are pronounced as they appear.



## Basics

- Bwana asa fiwe (Bwănă äsä fēwāy) – Praise the Lord!
- Yesu ni Bwana (yā-soo nē Bwănă) – Jesus is Lord
- Habari? (hă-băr-rē) – How are You?
- Mzuri (m-zūr-rē) – I'm fine.
- Sawa sawa (să-wă să-wă) – Okay
- Kwaheri – (kwă-hăir-rē) – Goodbye
- Natoka ... – (nă-tō-kă) – I'm from ...
- Ndiyo (ndē-yō) – Yes
- Sana (să-nă) – Very/Most/More
- Sasa (să-să) – Now
- Hapa (hă-pă) – Here
- Na (nă) – And
- Matatu (mă-tă-too) – Bus/Van
- Mondasi (măn-dă-sē) – Donut/Croissant
- Maji (mă-gē) – Water
- Moto (mō-tō) – Hot
- Mzungu (mzoon-goo) – White/European
- Rafiki (ră-fē-kēy) – Friend
- Mtoto (mtō-tō) – Child
- Mwokozi (mwō-kō-zē) – Savior
- Mungu (moon-goo) – God
- Mimi (mē-mē) – I
- Wewe (wăy-wăy) – You
- Yeye (yăy-yăy) – Them
- Shamba (shăm-bă) – Farm
- Pesa (pây-să) – Money
- Mdudu (mdoo-doo) – Bug/Insect
- Paka (pă-kă) – Cat
- Kuku (koo-koo) – Chicken
- Samaki (sŭh-mă-kēy) – Fish
- Simba (sēm-bă) – Lion
- Punda (poon-dă) – Donkey
- Hakuna Matata (hă-kŭh-nă mă-tă-tă) – No Problem
- Twende (twēn-dăy) – Let's go
- Ninakupenda ... (nē-nă- koo-pëndă) – I like ...
- Ninataka soda baridi (nē-nă-tăkă soda bă-rē-dē) – I want a cold soda

## Four BIG Words

- Choo (chō) – Toilet
- Jambo (jăm-bō) – Hello
- Hapana (hă-pă-nă) – No
- Asante (ŭh-săn-tăy) – Thank you

## You MUST Know!