

Discussion Paper on Mission Teams

Elements of Effective and High Kingdom Impact Missions Teams

1. Understand and articulate the church's vision for global service and engagement.

- What are the values that both drive where and how you will engage teams? What is your strategy?
 - *For example, caring for the most vulnerable in the world by providing tangible assistance through education, justice work, sustainable livelihoods, discipling, equipping for service, etc.*
- What are the essential elements that you look for in determining where and with whom you will serve?
 - *For example, some of these elements might include partnership, sustainability of local programs, empowerment of local leadership, compatible ministry values, etc. Others?*
- Clarity of vision is vital as well as understanding what gifts, abilities, experience God has placed within a congregation.
- Long term commitment to a location is important.
- Trips are a training piece to teach our believers and cultivate discipleship.

2. Develop a commitment to sustained, empowered partnerships.

- It takes an investment of time and financial resources before sending teams. Lead with relationship and not money. Ensure aligned missional values and focus with potential local partners. Understand the real needs and opportunities.
- Get “beyond the yes.” Understand that local partners may have been socialized into a benefactor-recipient mindset. Be mindful of the “power differential” between a North American Church and local churches in other parts of the world.
- A win is establishing a self-sustaining, self-propagating, indigenous Church of God congregation where Jesus is the Subject.
- Be a sounding board and a support on another level not just money but resources.
- Encourage the smaller churches to go deeper into relationship with one or two partners instead of engaging with several about money.
- Weighted value charts can be helpful to align your vision and partners.

3. Establish a wise decision-making process for team formation.

- What has God placed in your hands in terms of the church and its people? What relationships has God already given you? Sometimes passion can drive involvement in unhelpful ways. There needs to be a process that helps ensure that passion is in alignment with actual needs as well as maximum benefit for those who are served.
- What needs to be articulated regarding who can be a part of a team? What are the characteristics for which you look in deciding who is suitable for a team and who is not?

Does local service precede global service? An important aspect of deciding what is needed is being clear about what is not needed.

- Right-sizing the team. What is the right number for a team? What are the factors that help ensure that the team is the right size?
- Capable mission team leadership is essential. How is such leadership identified, equipped and called to lead? What are the key competencies for mission team leaders?
 - *For example, spiritual maturity, good communicator, organizational skills, sound judgment, “cool, calm and collected”, sensitive to the needs of others, ability to appropriately challenge and guide others, etc.* What are other key attributes you look for in potential team leaders?

4. Provide appropriate team training and equipping as well as needed administrative support

- Needed training and equipping ensured for teams (pre-trip, on the trip, and post-trip). How do you identify and ensure those preparing teams are the right people?
- Who handles the trip/team logistics? Who tracks funds and ensures proper accounting for the funds? What support systems need to be in place? Are there contingency plans in place in the event of a crisis event?
- 7 Standards of excellence from SOE.org
 - God-Centeredness
 - Empowered partnerships
 - Mutual Design
 - Comprehensive Administration
 - Qualified Leadership
 - Appropriate Training
 - Thorough follow through
- If you have the principles down, the other details begin to align.

5. There is a plan to keep team members engaged on return.

- Many of us have heard people say, “I’ll never be the same!” only to see them return to being the same in a matter of weeks or months. How do we keep returning team members from losing the newfound passion? How do we keep them connected to the issues and people that so impacted them?
- Telling the Story. Use the story to expand the circle of influence and relationships.
- Put forth Biblical principles of how to serve not just the partner.
- Change the local church culture to modern mission missiology.
 - Focus on indigenous sustainability, not colonial missions.
 - Learn to say “no”; some people want to give things that we don’t need, say no.
- Have must read books in your Mission Leader’s library.
 - **Effective Engagement in Short-Term Missions: Doing It Right.** Robert J. Priest, Editor. William Cary Library 2008.
 - **Short-Term Mission: An Ethnography of Christian Travel Narrative and Experience.** Brian Howell. InterVarsity Academic 2012.

- **Cultural Intelligence: Improving Your CQ to Engage Our Multicultural World.**
David A. Livermore. Baker Academic 2009.
- **Leading Across Cultures: Effective Ministry and Mission in the Global Church.**
James E. Plueddemann. InterVarsity Academic 2009.
- **Global Mission Handbook: A Guide to Cross-cultural Service.**
Steve Hoke and Bill Taylor. InterVarsity Press 1999.
- **Short-Term Missions Workbook: From Mission Tourists to Global Citizens.**
Tim Dearborn. InterVarsity Press 2003.
- **Ministering Cross-Culturally: An Incarnational Model for Personal Relationships (Second Edition)**
Sherwood G. Lingenfelter and Marvin K. Mayers. Baker Academic 2003.
- **Western Christians in Global Mission: What's the Role of the North American Church?** Paul Borthwick. InterVarsity Press 2012.
- **A Smoldering Wick: Igniting Missions Work with Sustainable Practices.**
Gena Thomas. Tate Publishing 2016.