

Baptist Medical Dental Fellowship

## Dental Mission Project – Team Helps

Thank you for joining this Dental Mission Project team. By making this choice, you are choosing to obey the call issued to every Christian in the Great Commission. You are committing your lives, talents and resources to the task of telling the love of God in Christ Jesus. It is our prayer that this experience will help you see more clearly God's working in your life and will result in you experiencing greater intimacy with God as you serve through Baptist Medical Dental Fellowship.

As healthcare volunteers like you go on short-term mission projects they personally advance the cause of Christ around the world. Additionally, as they report their experiences to their churches and friends, they recruit more knowledgeable missions praying, promote more generous missions giving, and encourage greater participation in missions going. This process works to move Christians forward to an even greater involvement in missions.

This handbook contains general information that will be especially helpful to those who have never traveled overseas or gone on a mission trip before. But there is much information in this little booklet that will benefit every participant, even veteran mission travelers.

Specific information for each trip will be prepared and distributed in a different format. That additional material will include trip cost, payment schedule, travel itinerary, and an outline of activities on the field.

Please read this material carefully with pen in hand so you can mark places where you might have questions or places that contain information you want to remember as you prepare for your trip.

## **Expectations**

All of us have expectations when we embark on a trip. Some are specific and easily identified. Others are more general, more of a feeling, and not easily defined. As you prepare for a mission project, you have expectations about what you think you will experience, or what you would like to experience. Begin now to make a trip journal and include your expectations. This will help focus on why you are going and what you expect to see God doing in and through you.

BMDF also has some expectations for you. You are expected to conduct yourself in a manner that would honor Christ, Baptist Medical Dental Fellowship, and your team. You go as an ambassador of Christ, bearing a message of hope and life. BMDF hopes this experience will touch your life in a significant way and draw you into a deeper, more intimate relationship with God.

It would be unrealistic to expect that every part of every trip is high adventure, great tourism, and joyful service to God in every way everyday. Along with the joy and adventure of the journey, there can be a high degree of stress on mission trips. There are several contributing factors: cultural differences, weather, living conditions, lack of personal space, schedule, food, and often the inability to communicate with the nationals. Additionally, it can be difficult to make contact with family back home. This stress creates tension and can cause team members to act in an unloving manner. Your highest commitment must be to the task before you. You go to serve God and be a good team member.

Your mission experience will be preceded by team meetings. Logistics of the trip will be discussed, assignments made, and expectations clarified. In an organization as large as BMDF, often team members meet for the first time in these meetings. These times contribute not only to building a strong team, but also to building relationships that will last beyond the trip itself. Each team member is expected to attend each of the training sessions.

The ministry you go to work with will also have expectations for you and your team. These will be spelled out prior to your team meetings. The team will discuss these expectations prepare to meet them as effectively as possible.

## **A Good Team Member**

### ***...is committed to the task***

I CORINTHIANS 9:24 Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. 25 Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. 26 Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air.

### ***...is teachable, humble***

PSALM 25:9 He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way.

### ***...is supportive of the other team members***

I CORINTHIANS 3:5 What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe-as the Lord has assigned to each his task. 6 I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. 7 So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.

### ***...is willing to try new things, eat new foods***

LUKE 10:8 "When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is set before you.

### ***...listens to God and to the team***

ACTS 16:9 During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." 10 After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

### ***...cooperates in every task***

NEHEMIAH 4:13 Therefore I stationed some of the people behind the lowest points of the wall at the exposed places, posting them by families, with their swords, spears and bows. 14 After I looked things over, I stood up and said to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people, "Don't be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your homes." 15 When our enemies heard that we were aware of their plot and that God had frustrated it, we all returned to the wall, each to his own work.

### ***...ministers to others, is a servant***

MARK 9:35 Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, "If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all. "

***...is willing to sacrifice personal matters for the work***

MARK I :35 Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.

***...is motivated for the task***

I CORINTHIANS 9:16 Yet when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, for I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!

***...bears others burdens***

GALATIANS 6:2 Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

***...is a learner***

ACTS 11:22 Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: "Men of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. 23 For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. Now what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you.

***...is relational, not a loner***

I CORINTHIANS 12:12 The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ.

***...observes and asks questions***

ACTS 19:2 and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" They answered, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." 3 So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?" "John's baptism," they replied. 4 Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." 5 On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.

***...manifests the fruit of the Spirit***

GAL 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

## **Spiritual Preparation**

A mission experience is a spiritual task. Therefore proper spiritual preparation must be made prior to departure. Everything we do as Christians comes out of our relationship with God. It follows that the first part of preparation for a mission project is to ensure that the devotional part of your life is all that it should be.

Some people like to use devotional books to guide their devotional life; we suggest this is a good time to try using just the Bible and a notebook. God is always speaking to us, and this is a good time to practice listening to Him from the Word for guidance and insight. As you read the Bible, note verses that seem to "come alive" for you. Record impressions or thoughts you have concerning verses you read or the mission you are undertaking. This is the beginning of your spiritual journal.

It is important for you to make sure all your relationships are in good order. You are involved in a spiritual task and will be opposed by spiritual forces. Often one of the first places Satan attacks us is in relationships. If a relationship with someone close to us is not in good shape, it is difficult to concentrate on a spiritual task.

It is equally true that Satan will try and attack relationships on the team. A mission experience lends itself to tension among members and Satan is very adept at sticking a finger in any crack in these relationships to make it wider. Team unity can be injured, thus hindering team effectiveness. Sometimes injuries to personal relationships can extend beyond the trip itself. It takes diligence to ensure that the team operates on a high spiritual level and effectively deals with these spiritual attacks.

A spiritual journal is helpful in tracking spiritual progress. If you do not usually keep one, this will be a good time to try it out. Record significant verses and thoughts God brings to you during your quiet times. Add to those the ideas and devotional thoughts other team members share in the team times. While on the mission trip, record the events of each day and how you see God working. Record how God brings together the thoughts and promises given before the trip to apply them to the situation on the field. When you return from a trip, review all the things recorded. Often it is in this review time that God shows what He has really been about.

Another part of spiritual preparation is to enlist intercessors to pray for you while you are on mission. Each team member is strongly encouraged to have at least two prayer partners and to pray with them every week prior to the trip. You are putting yourself in a position where you need strong prayer support. Find mature Christians who care about you who will lift you up daily while you are gone. When you return from the trip, make it a point to meet with these intercessors and give them a report on how you saw God work while on the trip. Ask them to journal their experiences and then you can share these when you return. Both of you may be amazed at what you learn.

## **Physical and Mental Preparation**

Normally, one doesn't think much about needing to be physically prepared for a mission experience. But the fact is these experiences are physically demanding. There are at least four reasons for this:

### **WALKING**

You will not have the luxury of a personal automobile while on the journey. That means you must use public transportation. You will walk to the bus stop and stand around waiting for the bus. If it is crowded, which is often the case, you will stand until you reach your stop. Then you walk again until you reach your destination. Often walking is built into the mission journey. For example, prayer walking, walking to distribute literature, or walking to make evangelistic visits are normal parts of a mission experience. Then there is walking to eat, walking to a refreshment stand, walking to church, and just walking to look around. Usually there are stairs as well.

It is not unusual to walk three or more miles per day. Most of us don't normally walk that much in a normal day. So make some physical preparation to avoid being overcome by the walking. If you are not a walker already, begin a walking exercise program eight to ten weeks prior to your mission journey.

*Practical Recommendations:* Begin walking everywhere possible. Walk in the morning for exercise. Park at the far end of the parking lot and walk to wherever you are going to shop. Use the stairs instead of the elevator. Walk after meals.

If you plan to purchase new walking shoes for the trip, do it **early** so they will be broken in by the time of the trip. There are few things more uncomfortable than shoes that don't fit right when you have to be on your feet all day.

### **PERSONAL SPACE**

Most of us are accustomed to having a lot of personal space. We often have time alone during the day. Even if we work in an office, there are times when we can escape from the crowd for a few minutes. There is always time in the evening when we are away from crowds. This is usually not the case on a mission trip.

Often you are with team members from the time you awaken until bedtime. For most of that time, there are also others around you - the missionaries you are working with and the nationals to whom you go to minister.

Meal times are group times. Travel times are group times. Ministry times are group times. You must be willing to sacrifice your personal space in order to be a good team member. Remembering the reason you are on this journey and that this is only for a couple of weeks will make it easier to make this adjustment.

### **PERSONAL SCHEDULE**

Often on a mission trip you will leave your room early in the morning and not return until bedtime. All day is spent away from the hotel in ministry with very little time to relax.

Additionally, the meal schedule will likely be different from your customary schedule. There may well be times when you only eat two meals a day, or you may discover that your host culture dines much later at noon or later in the evening than is your custom.

You will discover the nights are much shorter than you would like. It is normal for ministry time to take place in the evenings. Early in the morning is often the time when the team will meet together for a devotional time and to go over the plans for the day.

This is another sacrifice one makes in order to be a good team member.

### **REST**

Preparation for a trip can be hectic. There are many last minute things to do before leaving. It is easy to assume you will be able to rest on the airplane since it is a long flight. That is a false assumption. Most people find they do not rest well on an international flight, no matter how long it is or how tired they are when they board the airplane. There are too many new experiences and the adrenaline rush drives sleep away. For this reason, it is very important to be well rested when you depart. Make every effort to get a good night's sleep for a couple of nights before the trip starts.

## **Crossing Cultures**

You are going to a country where things will look very different from the way they do stateside. Try to let the visual differences remind you that there are cultural differences as well. Don't expect the same services, the same conveniences, and the same responses you are accustomed to. Train yourself to think, "Things are not wrong, they are just different." And always remember, in the eyes of those who look so different to you, YOU are the one who is different.

*Here are some tips on how to function in a different culture without offending:*

- ~ People may not be able to understand your spoken language, but they can read your body language.
- ~ Food that is strange to you is daily fare in that country.
- ~ Food that is bland and repetitive may be the only food available.
- ~ Even though most people in your host country do not speak English, there are usually some who do. Be careful about what you say walking down the streets. Do NOT assume you are not being understood.
- ~ Most cultures are generally quiet and reserved in public. Try to observe the host country's behavior patterns and conform to them.
- ~ You are NOT in America. You are a guest in another country.
- ~ Temples and idols that are strange, repulsive, or frightening to you are worshipped by those in your host country. Try to mask your true feelings of distress or horror with a look of interest.
- ~ Missionaries tend to adapt to the host country to the point that they enjoy many of the different foods you find too strange to eat. They will offer you local food they have learned to love. Out of politeness to your missionary host, don't act like it is grossing you out. You may decline it, but be sensitive.
- ~ Missionaries adapt to the host culture and use many local customs in their own homes.
- ~ Missionaries develop a genuine love for their host country. That extends to the food and customs. It is never good to criticize something a person loves in his presence.
- ~ Be prepared to be the object of stares. You are different and will be observed. All of your actions are watched.
- ~ Remember that you are an ambassador of the King of Kings. Be sure your actions reveal that truth.

## **Passports and Visas**

If you do not have a passport, it normally takes 6 weeks from the time of submission until the passport arrives. You must have your passport to obtain a visa; visa applications take 2-4 weeks. **START NOW** to obtain your passport.

An application for a passport can be obtained from the Post Office. Take the application home to complete and return it to the Post Office. **DO NOT SIGN THE PASSPORT APPLICATION UNTIL YOU ARE IN THE PRESENCE OF THE PERSON WHO WILL RECEIVE IT.** Government regulations require you to sign it in the presence of the post office personnel.

The process for obtaining a visa varies. Most countries stamp the visa into the passport. Normally when we are ready to obtain visas, we will collect all the passports and give them to our travel agent. They are stamped and returned to the travel agent who may hold them until the tickets are complete and then send them both to us. Then we check to make sure that everyone has both a ticket and a visa.

You will need passport-sized photos to submit with the visa application. If you do not have passport photos, go to a commercial photographer, or another place that makes passport photos, and have them made. Request at least 6 copies. This will be enough to apply for the passport, the visa, and then have 2 more to take with you. If you lose your passport, you will have extra pictures and that will shorten the process of obtaining a new passport.

### **A WORD OF CAUTION**

Be careful with your passport and airline tickets. Make a copy of the front page of your passport and take that in your luggage. Also make a copy of the page with the visa you obtained for the trip. Make sure the date of issue is clear in the copy. Add to that the extra photos (2) you had made and that will expedite securing another passport if yours is lost or stolen.

## **Immunizations**

B MDF recommends following Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Guidelines for Traveler's Health. Find details at this link:

*<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/>*

## Packing Tips

- Take only 1 personal suitcase (you may be taking another with supplies). You will likely walk to public transportation and put your luggage on buses or trains.
- IF YOU PACK IT, YOU CARRY IT!
- Luggage needs wheels!
- Generally, you can get by with fewer clothes than you think you can.
- Pack clothes appropriate to the climate. Your team leader will give you information on climate and clothing needs.
- If you are taking a 2<sup>nd</sup> suitcase for supplies for the trip, pack half of your clothes in each suitcase. That way if only one suitcase arrives, you will at least have part of your clothes.
- Be sure and pack any prescription medications in your carry-on.
- Be sure and pack clean underwear and possibly other clothes in the carry-on in case your luggage does not arrive at the same time you do.
- As airlines enforce carry-on regulations, the 1<sup>st</sup> pieces of luggage they exclude are the small suitcases with wheels and a handle. A backpack or gym bag is nearly always allowed on board.
- A light jacket or long-sleeved shirt is often comfortable on long flights.
- Be sure all luggage has your name and address on it. It is also a good idea to put a card with your name and address *inside* your suitcase.
- Luggage straps sometimes are the only things that hold your suitcase shut. It also helps mark your bag so it is easy to locate on the conveyer belt.
- You may want your Bible and journal in your carry-on.

## Project Debriefing & Evaluation

1. Highlights of the trip:

a.

b.

c.

d.

e.

f.

2. "Lowlights" of the trip (disappointments, or negative events):

a.

b.

c.

d.

3. What were some of the expectations you had going into this trip?

a. Circle the ones that were realized. Comment.

b. Underline the ones that were not. Comment.

4. What was the single most fulfilling experience for you?

5. What was the greatest lesson learned?

6. What areas could you have been better prepared for?

7. What could have been done to better equip you for this trip?

8. Was there a time/experience in which you strongly sensed the presence of God?

9. What did you learn from this that could impact your ministry/service at home?

10. Where do you rate yourself regarding mission service? Check all that apply.

I THINK GOD MAY WANT ME TO BE A CAREER MISSIONARY.

I DEFINITELY WANT TO RETURN ON ANOTHER SHORT-TERM MISSION PROJECT.

I AM GOING TO BE A SUPPORTER OF OTHER VOLUNTEERS.

I WILL BE A PRAYER PARTNER FOR OTHER VOLUNTEERS.

I DON'T THINK I WILL GO ON ANOTHER MISSION TRIP.

11. On a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 being very good and 4 being very bad, please rate:

PRE-TRIP INFORMATION	1	2	3	4
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PRE-TRIP TRAINING	1	2	3	4
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TRAVEL	1	2	3	4
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TEAM LEADERSHIP	1	2	3	4
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OVER-ALL EXPERIENCE	1	2	3	4
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If something was very bad, how would you suggest we change it?

12. What other suggestions do you have for improving future mission trips?

13. Other comments: