



GLOBAL MINISTRIES SHORT-TERM POLICY

Northside Baptist Church



“....go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” Matthew 28:19-20

Northside Baptist Church

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Northside Baptist Church
Global Ministries
Short-Term Missions Policy

Purpose:

Short-Term Missions is an intrinsic part of the Global Ministries Department of Northside Baptist Church. Short-term missionaries are of great value to the work of missions.

- They can aid career missionaries on the field through children's ministries, Bible studies, construction work of church, medical, and educational facilities, the distribution of the Scriptures and Christian literature, and humanitarian aid.
- With clear communication beforehand to national church leaders and/or career missionaries, they can serve as a powerful source for new evangelistic initiatives, for the encouragement of local believers, and for the equipping of national leaders.
- They have the potential of playing a vital role in forming partnerships between Northside and nationals/churches in other countries for the sake of spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

"The partnership between the sending church and the receiving one, between the on-site mission professional and the short-term missions team, between the western Christians and the new converts in the less-developed nation, benefits everybody. The host community gets something they need accomplished by the team; the mission field representative need not spend [*their*] precious budget on something the incoming team will self fund, [*and*] the sending church derives enormous benefits from a core of charged-up, enthusiastic members who often go on to lead in other lay roles.

More important, we are fulfilling the will of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are taking His message into all the world, we are being good stewards of what He entrusted to us, and we are helping our brethren in need. What a great moment in history to share with one another. Let us rejoice and be glad in it: better yet, let us go out and do something about it!" *

Leadership:

The Global Team's short-term leaders will begin the process in putting a short-term trip together, but may assign another individual to actually lead the team, depending on the availability of a qualified leader. All team leaders must be experienced in taking short-term trips and have considerable knowledge and experience about the country/location where their team is planning to minister.

The success of the short-term team will be, in part, determined by the strength, skill, and flexibility of its leader.

- The leader must be an individual with a mature, godly character, and with experience to guide a cross-cultural team.
- The leader must be committed to God's call to mission work, viewing this as a sacred assignment.
- The leader must appreciate the fact that some of his/her team members may be inexperienced in both being introduced to other cultures and in participating as a member of a short-term team.
- Good leaders will take the time to learn and appreciate each team member's skills and personality traits, respect them for who they are, and make it a goal to do everything possible to turn the short-term missions trip experience into a positive experience causing an impact on lives for the glory of God.

- The team leader should become well acquainted with the team members and appoint an assistant, from the team, to work alongside him/her. This assistant should be involved in all planning. There may be times, while the team is traveling, or is in country, that the team leader may have to fulfill other responsibilities. Having an assistant who has a full understanding of the team's needs will provide leadership for the team in the absence of the leader.

Finally, it is important that the team leader communicates well with the Global Office ministry assistant while planning a trip. She will be handling details and fielding telephone calls and will need to be kept current with the team's activities.

The Process:

- The Global Team's short-term leaders are to explore and determine which trips would be advisable and possible. They may consider trips requested by church family members, requests that come from the fields, or requests to join teams from other churches/organizations.
- **Once the country/location, approximate dates, and estimated cost of the trip have been determined, the Global Team's short-term leaders are to present this information to the entire Global Team for approval. This should be done 6 to 8 months prior to the dates of the trip.**
- After Global Team's approval has been obtained, the team leader should be in continual contact with the host missionary/national on the field, making sure everyone is in agreement regarding dates, type of ministries to be provided by the team, and any other details necessary to avoid unrealistic expectations for both the host and the team.
- Once approval from the field has been confirmed, the short-term trip is to be advertised to the church family. Introductory meeting dates should be established and publicized inviting anyone who might be interested to attend. These meetings should begin 4 to 6 months prior to the trip, but certainly not any closer than 4 months out.
- **A team leader for the team is to be appointed. (It is not required for the leader to be a Global Ministries short-term leader—please refer back to team leader qualifications). From this point on, this leader is to be an active participant in the entire planning process.**
- A short-term review committee is to be established, which will be made up of the Global Team's short-term leaders, the leader chosen for a specific trip, the Global Team's chairman, and the Team's pastoral leader. The committee will determine what educational tools should be provided for the short-term team. ***It is the team leader's responsibility to set up a meeting with the above people and recommend various options that could be offered***, such as a course in missions offered weekly over the months prior to the trip, videos offered for viewing, books offered for reading, or any other options suggested. However, whatever is determined, it will be made clear to the short-term team that these educational tools are not optional but are required in order to participate in the trip.

Once proposed team members have been identified, steps to be taken are as follows:

- **A signed Short-Term Team Contract, an Application and References** must be completed and submitted to the Global Ministries office, along with a **non-refundable \$200.00** that will be applied to the individual's trip expenses.
- Once submitted, each proposed team member will have an **informal interview** by the short-term review committee (defined above).

- Such things to be considered with each proposed team member:
 - A. Are they believers?
 - B. Are they of like-minded Faith?
 - C. Do they display a willingness to commit to the preparation process such as being faithful to attend the meetings, participate in fundraisers, attend all required classes or read all required material, and be prompt in meeting all established pre-trip deadlines?
 - D. What is their purpose for joining the team?
 - E. And any other questions the committee may have depending on each individual.
- **Final approval for each proposed team member will be determined by this review committee. (If for any reason, the review committee should feel that an individual is not yet ready to take a short-term trip, the \$200.00 fee will be refunded to the team member. This is the only exception for refund of the \$200.00 fee.)**
- If at any time, the approved team member displays the unwillingness to keep their commitment to the team requirements or displays unwillingness to submit to the team leader and does not maintain a team-player attitude, the review committee shall have the option to reconsider whether it would be in everyone's best interest for that team member to participate.
- Upon approval, the team member must immediately obtain/renew their passport, if needed. It is important to confirm that your passport does not expire before the trip is completed. The most efficient way of obtaining/renewing a passport is to access the internet site <http://travel.state.gov> You can obtain your passport application and listings of all requirements. You will have to appear personally at your local passport office to complete the process. The St. Petersburg Passport Office is located at the Clerk of Court, 545 First Avenue N., St. Petersburg, FL, Phone 727-582-7771.

Required Meetings

- Regular weekly meetings for the short-term team and leader shall be established. The day and time can be determined by the team, according to what fits their schedules best. All team members will be required to attend these meetings. Any team member who misses more than 2 meetings will place their position as a team member in jeopardy, depending upon the reason for the absences. This will also be the case for any required classes. All reading assigned by the team leader is also required and must be completed. *Required team reading is designed to prepare the team member to learn as much as possible before the trip begins*
- *The meetings of the team members, along with any classes/reading materials that are required, are invaluable in preparing the team for the trip. Also, the meetings and classes can give the team leader the opportunity to get acquainted with each team member and gives the team members an opportunity to get acquainted with each other. Team dynamics are crucial when facing the stresses of another cultural setting. "Sandpaper moments" between team members can be rubbed smooth during this time which may help the actual trip to be more pleasant for everyone. .*
- It is very important that the team leader's authority is established ... not for the sake of power, but because the group must accept the team leader as having the last word on operational and logistical decisions. The team leader, in facing any interpersonal difficulties with individual team members or in observing any behavioral patterns which could add stress to the team as a whole, has the option to evaluate the situation and seek the advice from the review committee. Before taking any definitive action, however, it is advised that the leader speak privately with the individual first.
- **It is vital that the team establishes a devotional time at every meeting. The leader can lead in this time or ask a team member to take responsibility for that time. A short Bible study time and spending time together in prayer is very vital in the preparation process.**

Other topics for these meetings will depend on what country the team is heading to, what type of ministries the team will be providing, and the experience level of the team as a whole.

One particular aspect that the team will need to be prepared for is culture shock.

- Even in the age of internet communications around the world, team members can still be taken back and start to complain when things are not “like home” or do not meet expectations.
- It is important that the team leader prepares the team with the understanding that this is not a “overseas vacation.” Culture shock is very real and can set in when team members smell the stench of the back street alleys or see abandoned children living on the streets.
- There can be dirt, unusual food, and many different customs. There can be no hot water for showers, poor sanitary conditions, and the frustration of the language barrier.
- If the team leader can help prepare the team for some sense of how this experience will be different from their home environment, they can envision the differing conditions in advance, and it becomes less of a shock.
- Issues like cultural biases, cultural diversity, and cultural rules should all be discussed in advance. It’s important for the team to understand they are the visitor, and the impact of their ministry depends, in part, on how well they respect the nationals, their traditions, and the country to where they are guests.

Personal Spiritual Preparation:

Personal spiritual preparation is the most important thing that each team member can do to help the short-term experience be successful. The following are some helpful hints to follow in each team member’s personal devotions:

- Pray that you will be teachable, submissive to authority, and eager to serve,
- Pray for your team leaders and the other members of your team,
- Pray that you will demonstrate love toward the people you meet, and
- Pray for the people in the country/location where you will be serving.

Prayer should be regular and specific for each team member’s upcoming mission ... ask God to prepare you physically and emotionally and to prepare your heart to serve others. Also, ask your church family and your supporters to be in prayer for you as well.

It is to be the team leader’s responsibility to ask the Pastor on the review committee to make arrangements for a commissioning service on the Sunday just prior to the team’s leaving. This not only gives the church family the opportunity to corporately pray for the team but it helps make the church family supporters of the short-term experience.

Travel Arrangements:

Investigating the costs and making the airline reservations are the responsibility of the Global ministries assistant in the global office. Tickets will be purchased at the best rates possible. The ministry assistant will also obtain visas for the team, if they are needed.

- **It is important for each team member to know they are responsible for the entire cost of their airline ticket and visa.** *(Of course, funds can be raised individually and as a team to help*

cover these costs.)

- Once the dates have been confirmed, the ministry assistant will make the airline reservations. Once reservations have been made, there is usually a defined amount of time set by the airlines that the tickets must be purchased or the reservation will be cancelled. In most cases, the earlier the tickets are purchased the lower the cost will be. A copy of the reservation giving dates and flight times will be given to the team for their approval. **It is advised that the team carefully review the schedule and take into account all activities each individual may have that could interfere with the schedule.** If approved by the team, the ministry assistant will arrange for payment of the tickets.
- Once the tickets are paid for, no changes in individual itineraries will be made unless a serious situation would occur that was unforeseeable. Changes in itineraries are expensive and time consuming. Also, it can cause a higher risk of mistakes in itineraries which can be disruptive to the entire team. **This requirement will hold fast.**
- If for any reason, a team member finds he cannot go, but his ticket has been purchased, he will be responsible for the cost of his ticket.
- *If a team member planning to go is carrying a previous balance from prior trips taken, a ticket will not be purchased until the previous balance is paid.*
- Once an airline ticket has been purchased for an individual, the airlines will not reissue that ticket to another individual. Therefore, if a ticket has been purchased for any specific team member, and they find they cannot take the trip, the ticket cannot be transferred to another team member. However, that ticket can be used for future trips, The length of the validity of the ticket is determined by the airline and can fluctuate. It is advisable to use the ticket as soon as possible. The only stipulations placed on it by the airlines is that the second itinerary most cost \$1.00 or more over the original ticket cost ... in other words, no refunds will be issued by the airlines.
- *Purchasing the airline tickets and obtaining visas are the most costly part of any short-term trip. All team members should take this process seriously and be alert to anything that could cause a very costly mistake. The Global Ministries Department does not have the funds to cover "mistakes" or changes.*
- Once airline tickets have been purchased, it is the team leader's responsibility to see that all passports are turned in to the Global Ministries office. Many countries require visas and the passports will be needed to obtain them. Also, copies of the passports are made for the protection of the team member. The team leader will also be responsible to see that visa applications are distributed and filled out by team members and returned to the Global Ministries Office. With this information, visas will be obtained. Normally visas are not issued until close to actual traveling time so passports with visas will not be returned to the team members until the team is ready to leave on the trip.

Immunizations

The American Center for Disease Control has established guidelines as to what immunizations should be taken for specific destinations. The Global Office will consult with the local immunization office to determine what is needed for each specific trip, and the team leader will be responsible for informing the team members. Requirements can change from year to year so this information must be kept updated. It is always advisable to be up to date on the tetanus booster. If you have not had a booster shot within the last ten years, it is important to get one. The cost of all immunizations will be the responsibility of the team member.

Overseas travel insurance is always purchased for every team member. This is handled by the Global Ministries office and your account will be billed for the cost, which is minimal.

Support Raising

- ***Any funds that are paid by individual team members toward their own account cannot be refunded to them.***
- ***Any funds designated by the contributor to a specific team member will be applied to that team member's account by Global Ministries. However, once that team member's expenses are completely covered, it will be determined by the Global Team as to how the additional funds shall be used in short-term trips. It may be used to purchase ministry supplies or it may be used to help another team member with their expenses. All funds contributed to Northside Baptist Church are contributions made to a non-profit organization. In compliance with the IRS Tax laws, these funds cannot be refunded to the donor, distributed to another individual, or applied at the discretion of a team member.***
- ***Only team members who participate in each fundraiser will benefit from the funds raised in that event.***
 - Fundraising events should begin as soon as the team is formed. Funds will be needed to cover the airline tickets and other team expenses.
 - Fundraisers are to be spaced out so that there will not be more than one event each month. Spacing out the fundraisers avoids "hitting" the church family too hard financially in any given month.

Fundraising is a very important part of any short-term team experience, and it must begin early. The Global Ministries budget cannot "front" the funds for short-term trip airline tickets and visa expenses. If it is forced to do so, missionaries and projects may have to be put on hold in order to provide these funds to the short-term team. This could cause a hardship for those who were counting on the funds

- Mailing out support letters to friends and family could be the first fundraiser. A sample of a letter is included with this policy manual. The Global Ministries Office will provide you with commitment slips to be included with your letter and labels for your return envelopes. Enclosed, self-addressed envelopes and commitment slips are provided for the potential contributor to mail their contribution directly to the Global Ministries Office. **Each team member must submit their mailing list to the team leader for approval before mailing out the letters.** The purpose for this is to avoid too many letters going to any one church family.

It cannot be stated enough how important it is that funds coming in for any short-term trip should come through the Global Ministries Office first. This office has its own accounting for each individual team member and trip. The church's finance office cannot possibly provide that service. If funds are contributed through Sunday offerings or handled some other way and bypass the Global Office, the money will still be accounted to short-term missions. However, if the Global Office is not aware that the funds have come in, they do not get posted to the Global Office accounts. The Global Office and the church's finance office try hard to work together on this, but errors can happen when correct procedures are not followed.

It is also important that your supporters be advised to not write your name on the check. That is why the commitment slip is included. All checks must be made payable to Northside Baptist

Church. In order to be in compliance with IRS Tax laws, the donor can only be receipted when the funds are contributed to Northside

Other fundraisers held will be decided upon by the team ... the team is responsible for the planning and the logistics of each fundraiser. This is part of the short-term experience. If team members can not be counted upon to be available and to put forth their best effort, they may prove not be dependable to the team once it has arrived in on the field. Never assume that someone else is taking the responsibility for the team. It takes a fully operating team for success.

It is, again, important that the team leader continually communicates with the Global Ministries Office so that events can be placed on the church's master calendar and posters, bulletin inserts, and tickets can be provided. Ticket sales should begin far enough in advance to give the church family time to plan ahead for the events. The same is true if the team is asking for contributions for garage sales, auction sales, and etc.

All of these issues should be determined at the onset of team meetings. This can avoid undue stress for the team and for others.

Preparations for Leaving

The final week or two before leaving there will be many details to complete. It is advisable to take care of all that is possible in a timely manner throughout the preparation stages to avoid causing added stress just before leaving. It is best to have everything organized including clothing, personal medications (many of the over-the-counter medications we take for granted are not always available overseas so plan ahead by including aspirin /Tylenol, sunscreen, Pepto Bismol, etc.) plus prescription medications.

There may also be "packing parties" for the team if there are gifts and ministry materials to be taken. It will be the team leader's responsibility to have the team informed as to how much luggage can be taken, what weight and type of clothing will be needed, and what other articles may be needed. It may also be necessary for each team member to be responsible for one ministry bag.

In light of tightening security in airports, it is advisable to discuss ahead of time what type of articles will not pass through airport check-points or customs. It is possible that a simple pair of fingernail clippers or a small pair scissors can hold up the entire team. It will be up to the leader to cover this information carefully with the team in advance.

It is advisable to carry a laminated copy of your passport in a separate location from your original passport in case it should be lost or stolen. This copy will be provided by the Global Ministries Office.

Many other aspects of your travel will be discussed with the team leader in your advance meetings. This is another reason why team meetings are so important and should be attended consistently and attentively.

Attached Documents

Along with the example of a support letter, attached also are other documents that are required to be submitted to the Global Ministries Office. You will not be able to be a part of the team if these documents are not completed. You will be required to provide:

- A signed Short-Term Missions Contract
- A Notarized Release & Waiver of Liability Agreement
- A completed Emergency and Medical Information sheet.
- A copy of your individual insurance card.
- The Beneficiary Form
- A complete and notarized International Power of Attorney form

Ministry while onsite:

While ministering to the needs of others, the team's leader will provide each team member a daily devotional guide to be used during the short-term missions trip. These devotions are to be designed to provide daily strength and refreshment for you while you are giving so much to others. You will be tired and will need time alone with God.

Each team member is also encouraged to keep a journal.

Both of these practices can enhance your trip, help keep you spiritually refreshed, and provide recorded memories of the your experience.

The Bigger Picture

Bear in mind that despite your most carefully planned mission team, the local community you will be ministering to has been in place long before you arrive and will be there long after you leave. By viewing the hosts as partners in God's overall plan, each team member can have a healthy perspective of what can be accomplished. In seeing the contribution each team member gives as one tiny part of the whole, stress can be relieved and perhaps too high expectations can be avoided. Each team member has allowed God to use them as His servant for this ministry know that God determines the outcome as well. Hopefully and prayerfully each short-term experience can enrich the lives of both the giver and the receiver, with the ultimate goal of seeing all the glory for the success given to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

*Much information for this policy statement was taken from, *The Essential Guide to the Short Term Mission Trip* by David C. Forward. A book highly recommended to read, especially for the leaders of short-term teams.