



People-to-People Pilgrimage Program Guide for Participants



**A Guide to Help You Prepare for Your
International Pilgrimage**

People-to-People Pilgrimage Program

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A common witness of the Division of Overseas
Ministries, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and
Wider Church Ministries, United Church of Christ

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WELCOME!

Global Ministries welcomes congregations, regions, conferences, and other affiliated organizations of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada and the United Church of Christ in the United States to consider prayerfully the idea of taking a journey to meet international partners in person. A mission pilgrimage is a transforming experience through which participants share themselves and receive God's love in a new way. Participants take common steps of faith in walking with our partners, sharing their joys, understanding their challenges and experiencing their unique connection to our wider church.

It is through the People-to-People Pilgrimage Program, that your local church can connect with partners and share with them their work and witness. Through this program you will:

- explore the various possibilities that would best match the gifts of the group
- draw on the expertise and guidance of our area offices
- initiate communication with our international partners in coordinating your pilgrimage experience
- receive reflection and orientation materials to help your group prepare for the cross-cultural experience
- network with other congregations, Regions, and Conferences who have undertaken similar pilgrimages.

In mutuality, we will walk humbly toward the future of God's work by walking together sharing our lives, hopes, struggles and faith.

The People-to-People Pilgrimage Program is a service to make your pilgrimage a true opportunity to share in a journey of transformation with our partners. Following are a few of the initial steps that can help move your pilgrimage forward:

- Have a brainstorming session on the goals for your pilgrimage. Talk about what you are hoping to receive and what you are hoping to give. (Be open to revising these as you come into contact with partners.)
- Make a tentative decision about possible dates of travel as well as the region or country of interest. Identify at least two or three options for both travel dates and destination; the practicality of these options will eventually be explored cooperatively with our partners.
- Keep in mind that 8 - 12 is the ideal group size. Because our international partners know best how many people they can accommodate graciously without over stretching their resources and energy, they will share with you the maximum number of pilgrims invited to participate.
- Select a group contact person who will begin exploring the possibilities with the program coordinator.
- Share your plans with both your congregation and your conference or region. Use it as an opportunity to include others who may not be able to travel but can share the experience by supporting the pilgrimage with prayer, finances, and education.

Tell us your story! It's a joy to learn of the connections that you have nurtured in mission. If you have already planned a pilgrimage through another agency, you are invited to contact us and share highlights of your pilgrimage. If you have not yet traveled, consider visiting a mission co-worker or a Global Ministries partner in the country to which you are traveling. Contact us today to begin a journey of walking in hope together in God's mission!

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

MULTICULTURAL LEARNING

An intensive cross-cultural experience is both dislocating and disorienting. It presents unique challenges for learning. Often, this experience is described as “culture shock”, suggesting a distinctive psychological experience. But culture shock is in no way a distinctive life experience. It is merely the escalation of the normal life process of coping with change. The questions for the traveler, therefore, might be:

- **What personal qualities do I need to develop to best cope with change?**
- **How can I really learn and not just react?**
- **How can I learn to ask questions that elicit answers appropriate to the context?**
- **How do my feelings, values, and attitudes construct barriers to learning?**

“With appropriate questions, proper study, and careful concern, it is possible to develop a ‘double vision’ – the ability to see more than one side of an event. It is also possible to increase one’s empathy – the ability to sense how an event appears and feels to someone else.” – Author unknown

There will be times when you feel that you simply cannot absorb one more new thing, so it is important to have a learning methodology; to develop the basic skills for cross-cultural learning.

As you prepare for your mission pilgrimage, try to be systematic. Your natural curiosity has probably already taken you to an atlas and some sources of basic information. Now start to process the information. Record the expectations you have as you enter into this experience. Each of your expectations embodies a whole set of questions. Turn your statements into questions you are hoping the experience will address for you. Framing questions is the first and most important step in learning to learn.

Your questions can be of any sort, trivial or profound, since their purpose is to serve as a catalyst for further thought. As you continue in your preparation, some of your questions will be answered; your first questions will be superseded by others that arise from your reading or conversations. Maintain a list of questions, revising them as you go along. Even after your arrival, you may want to continue revising your question list as you learn and discover more.

The question list will help you practice asking questions and will slow the usual tendency to make judgments (statements) before the questions have even been considered.

Asking questions that create dialogue is an art form. Like any art form, it requires practice and fine-tuning. Keeping a question list will fine-tune your skills. **Keep in mind that this handbook is intentionally directed at the learning style in which you live. Culturally, North Americans tend to be oriented to the objective world, to activity and achievement. Just remember that there are cultures in which other qualities are more valued. You may encounter a different sense of order. For cross-cultural learning, very helpful personal skills include: a sense of humor, moderate expectations, tolerance of ambiguity, and ability to cope with disappointment.**

What is culture?

Before embarking on your cross-cultural journey, consider what culture is, what your own culture is, and how your culture may differ from the one you will visit.

People often make the mistake of calling what is familiar “best” when in fact it is only familiar. This can express itself in feelings of cultural superiority. We in North America must conscientiously increase our willingness to receive the cultural insights and values of others.

Consider your motivations for embarking on a mission pilgrimage. Which of the following are included? What do they reveal? What is behind them?

- A. Personal pleasure; learning about the curious beliefs and practices of others; helping others who are more unfortunate than you; showing others a better way of life; teaching others what they should know about God, religion, or progress.
- B. Learning from other cultures; discovering other ways of life that can enrich your own; receiving as well as giving; engaging in a mutual experience of mission and action; openness and sensitivity to human differences; gaining new perspectives on your own culture, faith, and nation; and joining with others in establishing peace and human community.

There are subtle but significant differences between these two sets of motivations. The first set has been the traditional approach to cross-cultural relationships and does have its positive side. Yet our global neighbors and we have grown in our understanding of partnership. The second set of motivations described a fuller, deeper more mutually-empowering relationship, recognizing each party as equally gifted.

Because it is often difficult to identify or recognize our own culture, it is important that you and your group include a systematic study of the life and culture of North America in your learning about and engagement with another culture. Our responses to other cultures are influenced by attitudes, beliefs, values, assumptions and biases that shape our own life.

The following are North American value systems that vary greatly from other cultures:

- Wealth as a measure of success
- The idea that United States citizens are special people
- Private ownership of land and resources
- Individualism
- Concepts of time, work, and space
- Control and subjugation of nature
- Competitiveness, activism, informality, self-confidence, and optimism.

Look more objectively at your country’s dominant culture. Read resources from other cultures that provide perspectives and critiques of North American culture. Sometimes the voices are harsh, but listen to what they have to say. Or, imagine that you are describing life and customs in North America to someone who has never heard of or visited this area. For example, try explaining an NFL strike. The purpose of engaging with other cultures is not to study them, but to learn from people of those cultures and receive gifts of diverse cultures. An examination of geographical statistics and other guidebook information is important, but insufficient. Other people and cultures have an inner story to share that our preparation should enable us to receive. Before your trip, become acquainted with the

culture you will visit using every resource available to you. In addition to the materials provided by the People-to-People coordinator, search online, at your local library, museum, college, or university for music and artwork of the area you will visit. Discover the customs, traditions, and faith experiences of the people, and the roles of women, children and elders. Use more than just your head – perhaps there is a restaurant nearby that features similar food. You may be surprised at the resources out there!

Keep an open mind during all of your pre-trip findings. Remember that much of what we know in North America may be the result of research conducted many years ago, or by scientists from a single cultural perspective. Be prepared to learn new and perhaps different information from the contemporary setting, or from people whose experience does not fit the standard image.

When visiting a different place or culture, it is natural to look for similarities to your own culture. You may hear yourself say, “Why, they are no different from the folks back home. They are just like me.” While that is an attempt to identify the common humanity that binds us, it often covers an inability to recognize cultural distinctions and singularities. We need to progress from talking about cultural differences and how we must respect them to a lively and active interest in other cultural manifestations.

Reflection is a necessary part of the process, for there are no easy rules. Pinning things down too early and arranging your discoveries into neat models leads to stereotyping and false classifications. For instance, all Hispanic and Asian cultures are not the same. These cultural groups have many different national or regional sub-groupings. Any attempt to label an observation with the simple designation of Asian or Hispanic can lead to frustration and misunderstanding. Learning about other cultures will necessitate learning new concepts of time and space, as well as new values and attitudes. In most Western nations, including the United States, agreements are determined by literal words and specific provisions of a contract. In many cultures, it is the meaning and spirit of an agreement and one’s commitment to the agreement that is more important. These realities may be operative as you plan with another culture for this experience. You need not to change your own concepts, but you should consider the implications of conceptual differences for others and yourself.

To explore some cultural differences, examine the following scenarios:

- ❖ You arrive at the home of a family where you will stay for a few days. After a cordial reception, you retire to your room to unpack your suitcases. After unpacking some of your things, you go for a walk to see the city with a member of the family. When you return to your room, you are startled to see that your belongings seem to have been examined. Some of your personal items have been removed from your suitcase and left on the table. A flashlight you left on the table is missing. What is going on? What, if anything, should you do?

Before images of thievery enter your mind, you should be aware that many cultures throughout the world place a very high value on sharing of material goods. “What’s mine is yours” is indeed a way of life and not just a statement. In addition to a concept of sharing, privacy is a concept more pronounced in North America than in most other countries. A lack of private property and privacy is prevalent throughout the world as the rule rather than the exception.

- ❖ In a Latin American culture, you arrange to go to town to buy some things at a local store. The store is crowded and many people are gathered around the salesperson. While you wait your turn, you notice that the salesperson is waiting on three or four people at the same time, and that someone who came after you is waited on before you. Other persons still waiting appear

not to be disturbed, but you become angry and leave in despair. On the street you try to talk about this with a friend who is of that culture. He or she does not look you in the eye, rather shifts eyes from side to side. While you are talking, another person approaches you and your friend, and immediately your friend ceases talking to you and begins a conversation with the other person.

Before you regard this as a lack of manners and rude behavior, it is well to know that United States and Canadian cultures and Hispanic American cultures arrange their interpersonal relations differently. The United States is a monochronic culture, while most Latin American countries are polychronic. In the United States most interpersonal relations, whether formal or informal, are carried out in a one-to-one sequence, while in Latin countries several transactions will take place at the same time. While you were waiting your turn in that store, you were actually missing your turn. The friend with the shifting eyes was indeed looking for a newcomer to join your conversation for he did not want to be impolite.

- ❖ A Chinese American with excellent credentials is being considered for the position of youth director for your church. He is interviewed by the congregation's personnel committee, but he is not offered the job. Later you hear that he did not get the job because "he was too quiet." Most of the members of your youth group agree with the decision because they need someone who is gregarious and has an outgoing personality.

In Chinese culture, quietness and respect for superiors is considered an important value; therefore, the Chinese American was deliberately quiet in the interview. The personnel committee misinterpreted his quietness as incompetence and non-aggressiveness. If a similar situation should occur, what suggestions could you make to the Chinese American, or to the personnel committee?

(Adapted from CGE and UMC materials)

How To Be Much More Culturally Sensitive When Traveling

When you go out and experience the world on a mission pilgrimage, you are inevitably going to run into different people and different ways of life. Part of traveling is learning how to be sensitive of other people's cultures and lives, rather than trampling through like an obnoxious tourist.



Here are some ways you can be a conscientious pilgrim, and have cultural sensitivity at the forefront of your mind.

Become Aware Of Your Own Biases

Traveling is a quick way to come face to face with people completely different to you. And in that, you may be exposed to biases you did not know you had.

Learning about any biases is essential if you want to act respectfully when you venture internationally. Holding biases is not necessarily a bad thing; we are all wired to think a certain way. It is just a byproduct of our upbringing. The important thing is to be aware how your biases play into your thoughts, and how you choose to respond to them.

In order to learn more and to be aware about your own biases, and how these may play out when traveling, you can go to <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html> to take a test(s) before your next international pilgrimage. Global Ministries strongly encourages travelers to take one or several of these tests as you prepare to meet global partners. Even further, you can meet as a group several times to discuss the test(s) results and plan as a group how to respond to biases when they reveal themselves throughout your pilgrimage.

Exercise Restraint

At the time, it can seem very easy to exclaim how different things are there compared to where you are from. However, try to make an effort to keep those reservations to yourself, at least initially. You are going to run into different things, but they are not necessarily wrong, backwards, or misinformed because they are not what you are used to.

What you would essentially be doing is criticizing the way groups of people live, a way that may hold a lot of historical and cultural significance. Remember that you are trying to be a respectful guest.

Go in with the knowledge that not everyone is going to be equipped with a North American perspective, and be open to living a life that differs from yours, even if it is just for a little while.

Pay attention to what you say when partner's staff, guides, drivers, translators, and others are present. Teams are encouraged to have a private time of debriefing/reflection at the end of the day, and it may be a good time to express areas in which you may be struggling to process as a group.

Avoid Stereotyping

As you go about your travels, it is important to remain cognizant of not [stereotyping](#). Sure, some people you see may fit into stereotypes you have heard, and that is totally fine, but be careful not to write every person off just because you have noticed commonalities. Remember to think of people with the same depth you would with people back home.

Another great idea to prepare for your pilgrimage as a group is to meet and watch the TED Talk called *The Danger of a Single Story* by Nigerian novelist Chimamanda Adichie, and have a discussion afterwards. You can find her video here:

https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story?language=en.

Chimamanda says "So that is how to create a single story, show a people as one thing, as only one thing, over and over again, and that is what they become... The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete."

Learn Some Basic Phrases

It may surprise some that not every country you visit is going to be able to speak English, and those that do not are not going to bend over backwards to learn it just because you are dropping by. [Language barriers](#) are one of the hardest things to break through when traveling, so it is in your best interest to brush up on some [basic phrases](#) to make the pilgrimage a bit smoother.

Learning some basics will go miles with the locals, because it will show them you are willing to make an effort to communicate, instead of just talking loudly in English (note: never do that!).

If you are looking for a language crash course, [Duolingo](#) is a great mobile app you can take with you. In addition, the People-to-People coordinator will provide you with basic phrases in the language with which you will immerse yourself.

Be Aware Of Local Laws And Customs

A lot of culture is enshrined in a country's law, so before you travel make sure to read up on any local laws you may run into. [Smart Traveler](#) Enrollment Program is a U.S. government run website, which outlines many countries laws, customs, and risk factors. This should be on your pre-travel to do list wherever you go. To sign up and register your trip go to <https://step.state.gov/step/>.

One of the materials you will receive through the People-to-People Program, is a *Culture Gram* of the country (ies) you will visit. Culture Grams offer descriptions of customs, values, beliefs, traditions, and

institutions that create and mediate individual, community, and national identity in most countries around the world, allowing crucial connections to be made between the many facets that make up a country's culture. Every participant is encouraged to read the Culture Gram before traveling.

Dress Carefully

The easiest tactic you can employ to blend in and avoid causing offense is to dress modestly and simply, and if possible in a similar way to those around you. In general, if you pack neutral clothing — not too flashy, not too skimpy, not too colorful, without slogans and commercial messages, etc. — you cannot go wrong. When in doubt, err on the side of dressing conservatively.

- Skip tank tops and other clothing that exposes a lot of skin.
- Dress respectfully in houses of worship and other religious places. (A shawl or scarf can be useful to cover your head and/or shoulders in places where this is required.)
- Skip clothing with political or overt cultural references, or with potentially inflammatory language.
- Leave valuables and expensive jewelry at home!

Do Your Homework

Read, read, and read more! You can never have too much information about the country (ies) you will visit. Given the complexity and sensitivity involved, it is essential to get online and do some rigorous research for books, articles, documentaries, etc. that will help you prepare.

Restoring Dignity, Nourishing Hope: Developing Mutuality in Mission is a resource, produced by Global Ministries, to assist and guide churches to understand issues such as partnership, advocacy, mission pilgrimages, community development, evangelism and interfaith dialogue, and fundraising. Each chapter contains questions for study and reflection as well as suggested resources for further engagement, which you can use to study as a group before you travel. You can order a copy(ies) here:

<https://www.uccresources.com/products/restoring-dignity-nourishing-hope-developing-mutuality-in-mission-barnes-and-makari-eds>.

Adapted from: <https://junkee.com/how-to-be-much-more-culturally-sensitive-when-traveling/151953> and <https://www.smartertravel.com/safe-culturally-sensitive-travel/>.

A MINISTRY OF PRESENCE

By Nancy Lear, Chair of the Mission Trip Council
Country Club Christian Church, Kansas City, MO
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What do we DO on mission pilgrimages? How do we measure what we accomplish? These questions are asked both by members of our mission teams and by other members of the congregation. Sometimes we are tempted to measure our contribution by the number of rooms we have painted or the amount of moldy drywall we have stripped. The painting and the stripping and all of the other “projects” we DO on mission pilgrimages are important, but perhaps more important is our BEING THERE – a “ministry of presence.” Someone has put it another way, “there can be no sharing of what we have without a sharing of who we are.”

Our former mission co-workers in South Africa, Jon and Dawn Barnes, write that they “are very fond of the idea of ‘ministry of presence’ – almost more so than the ‘ministry of DOing.’ It is the ministry of presence where we find ourselves in solidarity with our brothers and sisters...it is where you truly meet one another, not always the case in hammering and painting where you are busy with a wall, a window or a floor. But both are important, and we feel you can do both on a mission pilgrimage. Did Christ not call us to listen, to be a friend, to sit by the bedside, to touch and to heal? Christ gives us the full picture of what ‘ministry of presence’ really means.”

Pilgrimage participants have experienced the ministry of presence while sharing meals and worship services with folks in townships in South Africa, talking with residents of the Samaritan Centre in East London, South Africa, playing baseball and soccer with children in villages in Nicaragua, sharing cinnamon rolls with residents of Greenville, Kansas, and getting reacquainted with old friends in New Orleans.

Michelle Schlatter experienced the ministry of presence on the family mission trip to South Dakota: “A ministry of presence means attending a sacred Native-American ceremony. Simply by being in Red Scaffold, South Dakota, at the right time, we were able to witness a centuries-old Lakota ceremony called Wiping of the Tears. A Lakota Elder then spoke to us about how important it is to him that we bring our children to the reservation to learn of the Lakota ways and to begin friendships and foster understanding between the Native-Americans and the White Man. He never once mentioned how he wanted us to repair the ceiling in the community center or cut the grass growing over the church steps.

A ministry of presence is my daughter being taught how to shoot a bow and arrow from a Lakota Elder, who worked diligently to teach the Lakota youth skills of the bow and arrow so they will not forget the ways of their people. But most importantly a ministry of presence means realizing that just by offering a smile and encouraging word to a young Lakota mother it can be the start of a real friendship.” In her book *Here If You Need Me*, Kate Braestrup says, “I am here to be with you...when you freak out or grieve or laugh or suffer or sing. It is a ministry of presence. It is showing up with a loving heart. And it is really cool.” And she is right. It is really cool. So – next time you talk to someone who has been on a mission pilgrimage, instead of asking, “What did you DO?” ask, “What did you experience?” You will hear about amazing things!

CODE OF ETHICS FOR PILGRIMS

- ❖ Travel in a spirit of humility and with a genuine desire to learn more about the people of your host country.
- ❖ Be sensitive to the feelings of other people, thus preventing what might be offensive behavior on your part. This applies to photography as well. Behave like a guest in your boss' home.
- ❖ Cultivate the habit of **listening and observing**, rather than merely hearing and seeing. Listen more than you speak.
- ❖ Seek opportunities to spend time with the people you meet, sharing stories and experiences, striving and struggling to communicate. Share spiritual practices with the hosts and learn from them.
- ❖ Realize that often the people in the country you visit have time concepts and thought patterns different from your own; this does not make them inferior, only different.
- ❖ Resist the temptation to fix things; you might not have the tools to do so, and the thing might not be broken in the first place.
- ❖ Instead of looking for that beach paradise, discover the enrichment of seeing a different way of life. Cast off your North American lens and look at the world through different eyes.
- ❖ Acquaint yourself with local customs. What is courteous in one country may be quite the reverse in another – people will be happy to help you.
- ❖ Instead of the practice of knowing all the answers, cultivate the habit of asking questions. Ask more than you tell.
- ❖ Remember that you are only one of the thousands of people visiting this country, and do not expect special privileges. If you really want your experience to be a “home away from home”, it is foolish to waste time and money traveling.
- ❖ Always ask your guide/leader if it is acceptable to bargain. This varies in every country, and you want to value and affirm the work that went into making the goods you are purchasing.
- ❖ Do not make promises to people in your host country unless you are certain you can carry them through. If moved to act, ask your hosts/leaders what is needed. Do not assume you know.
- ❖ Do not look for simple answers to complex problems, and do not implement complex solutions for simple problems.

- ❖ The purpose of your pilgrimage is not to sightsee, but to connect; not to help, but to learn; not to do, but to practice spirituality while (and as the means of) experiencing the land of great cultures and people.
- ❖ Spend time reflecting on your daily experiences in an attempt to deepen your understanding. It has been said that what enriches you may rob and violate others.
- ❖ **Be flexible!**



(Taken from the Christian Conference of Asia, 1975, and from Never Give Up: Vignettes from Sub-Saharan Africa in the age of Aids by Kevin Winge)

TEN COMMANDMENTS, EXPERIENCE AND SAFETY TIPS

Ten Commandments for pilgrimage participants:

1. You shall not forget that you represent your home country, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ, and Jesus Christ.
2. You shall not expect that things will be the same as they are at home, for you have left your home to find different things.
3. You shall not take minor things too seriously. Accepting things as they are paves the way for a good experience.
4. You shall not judge all the people by the one person with whom you have had trouble.
5. You shall not let other group members get on your nerves. So, enjoy yourself.
6. You shall not be overly worried. The person who worries has no pleasures. Few things people worry about are ever fatal.
7. Remember your passport and know where it is at all times. A person without documents is a person without a country.
8. Blessed is the person who says "thank you" in any language. Verbal gratefulness is worth more than tips.
9. When in Rome, do as the Romans do. If in difficulty, use common sense and your native friendliness.
10. Remember, you are a guest in this country. The one who treats a host with respect shall be treated as an honored guest.

Experience Tips:

1. Spend time with God every day in order to enjoy a personal, intimate relationship. Make this your first priority.
2. Be sensitive to how you can serve the people around you. Do not go expecting that others will serve you.
3. Go with a desire to learn all that you can from the people where you are going. DO NOT carry with you any sense of superiority because you are from North America.
4. Show respect for everyone. Do not be loud and obnoxious.

5. Follow carefully the instructions of your leaders, or you may jeopardize your safety and the safety of others.
6. Avoid carrying a wallet in your pocket or using a traditional purse in ways it can be seen. Consider special travel wallets that are worn inside your clothing.
7. Wear modest and unpretentious clothing. You are a personal ambassador of Jesus Christ.
8. Enjoy all the experiences that God gives you!

Safety Tips:

- ❖ Do not walk alone and do not be out after dark unless you are with the group. Try not to stray from the beaten path.
- ❖ Do not flash about large amounts of cash, expensive jewelry or electronic devices (better to be left at home).
- ❖ Unless advised by your leaders otherwise, do not drink the local tap water or use it to brush your teeth. Use bottled water only. This also means no drinks with ice. Where drinking the local water might be a problem, you will be provided with water.
- ❖ Do not eat food from the street unless approved by your leaders. This also applies to salads and vegetables.
- ❖ **Do not give out money on the street**, as it will most likely bring more and more people asking you for money. We recognize it is hard sometimes to say no, especially to children, but trust our partners and your leaders to let you know what is and when it is permissible.
- ❖ Do not give out personal contact information to anyone, unless you are open to the possibility of someone showing up at your door unexpectedly.
- ❖ Be aware of your surroundings ... Where you are; who is around you; etc. Just be aware.
- ❖ If you do happen to encounter thieves, give them what they ask for, no questions. They know about all the cute hiding places and money belts. It is always a better choice to replace materials goods than for you to put yourself in danger.
- ❖ Do not carry a wallet in your back pocket or money loose in open pockets; these are the easiest places for pickpockets. Carry most of your money in your money belt and put a few national coins in a small purse that you carry in your front pocket.
- ❖ Overall, do not think it will not or cannot happen to you or do something that you know is unsafe.

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

It is important that everyone in the group is clear about their roles and responsibilities throughout the pilgrimage. This is also a good way to help the leader of the group.

Conflict Resolution:

John 7:51 Does our law condemn anyone without first hearing him to find out what he is doing?

Proverbs 18:13 He who answers before listening, that is his folly and his shame.

1. Treat each other respectfully in order to build trust, and with the understanding that we all want to be faithful to Christ:
 - a. Keep communications open for candid and forthright exchange.
 - b. No questions or statements that intimidate or judge.
2. State what we think we heard and ask for clarification before responding, to make sure we understand each other.
3. Share concerns directly with individuals or groups with whom we have disagreements in a spirit of love and respect, in keeping with Christ's teachings. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. (Ephesians 4:15)
4. Focus on ideas and suggestions instead of questioning people's motives, intelligence or integrity. Agree not to engage in name calling or labeling of others before, during or after the discussion.
5. Share personal experiences about the subject of disagreement so that others may more fully understand our concern. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. (Ephesians 4:3)
6. Point out where we agree with other viewpoints as well as where we disagree.
7. Seek to stay in community with each other though the discussion may be vigorous and contentious.
8. Be ready to forgive and be forgiven.

GLOBAL MINISTRIES GIVING GUIDELINES FOR INTERNATIONAL TRAVELERS

Probably, people will ask you to help them out. Truly, the need is great and the resources are scarce. Chances are high the economy of the country you are visiting has deteriorated. You might even feel compelled to put your hand in your pocket, even if you are not asked. If you are asked to provide financial assistance and/or are moved to help out in a particular situation you encounter, please think first about these things...

- ❖ **Be aware that as a guest in a host church you are the receiver, not the bearer, of gifts.**

Learn to accept the hospitality and friendship of your host graciously. Be open to the many gifts they offer you ~ their insight to the Christian faith, their strength in adversity, their joy in living. Your willingness to receive what they have to offer you is the highest compliment you can pay them.

- ❖ **No matter how great the need may appear to be, do not let the impulse of the moment prompt you to offer assistance.**

Your visit is not meant to be an occasion for establishing direct financial links between you or your group and a local individual, institution, or congregation. Global Ministries works with our international partners to establish healthy and helpful means of sharing resources. What we as North Americans may intend as a spontaneous expression of generosity on our part ~ we who have so much ~ may be demeaning to those who do not have our abundance.

- ❖ **Respond courteously without making a commitment at any time.**

Do not promise something you cannot deliver, then or in the future, to get out of an embarrassing situation. The person making the request probably does not expect an immediate response from you. Furthermore, some conversation about the circumstances prompting the request may be in order with some general expression on your part of understanding and sympathy regarding the need. You may want to say that you would like to talk with some other persons about this; your group leader, hosts, a Global Ministries staff person, a mission co-worker, etc.

- ❖ **Always consult with someone who knows the local situation well about the request(s) you may receive, or regarding any monetary gift(s) you may be moved to give.**

Visitors must be very careful about selective generosity. A gift to a particular person, group, or congregation can create difficulties for the local church or community leadership. Most of all, in a situation where the economy has deteriorated, you might be disempowering the people by solving an

immediate problem that is the product of a larger economic problem for which they need to find alternatives. You may also unintentionally be promoting a dependency on external assistance. Moreover, those who request assistance may not be those who most need assistance. Some people are better at, and more willing to request help than others. Partner churches and programs usually know who is in most need in their midst, and have priorities for the use of any assistance that may come their way. Once you are home, if you wish, the Global Ministries Resource Development Office will work cooperatively with the respective Area Office in channeling any monetary gift you would like to make, in such a way as to avoid any hint of disempowerment and/or dependency.

There are many opportunities for special giving through our church, including giving to the situation you have visited overseas. To make a special gift to support future delegations and experiences of this nature, or to contribute toward other ministry initiatives, please contact...

GLOBAL MINISTRIES RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

Rev. Jane Sullivan-Davis, Director

(317) 713-2555

gifts@dom.disciples.org

GUIDELINES FOR TAKING PHOTOGRAPHS IN ANOTHER COUNTRY

It is important to remain present in all activities of your visit to our partners by paying attention, listening, and participating. Always ask persons for permission before taking their picture. Many tourists rudely take pictures of people and children without asking permission. Assign ONE leadership photographer to the group (this person can also maintain the laptop for “e-journaling”, homeland communication, and photo documentation).

You can go to <http://www.culturocity.com/pdfs/Photography%20Guide.pdf> to learn more about appropriate picture taking when traveling overseas.

GETTING READY!

WHAT TO PACK

About your luggage:

Please plan to limit yourself to one piece of checked luggage in addition to your carry-on. The more you can pack things in plastic (see-through) bags the better, which helps speed up any delays at Customs and means that TSA is not touching all your things. Definitely, packing all your liquid items in Ziploc bags will protect your clothes from spills. Place soft things toward the outside, cushioning breakables in the middle. Please keep in mind the airline restrictions on number of bags and weight limits. Visit <http://www.tsa.dhs.gov/> for the latest information. You may have excess baggage fees.

As a guideline: your checked suitcase should be no bigger than 26". Weight restrictions are lowering. A suitcase larger than 26" can put you over weight, even if packed only partially full. If you are purchasing new luggage buy those with the four all-directional wheels. A rolling backpack is very useful.

Do not pack your bags too full. You may have to help carry some group items/gifts and you will need room for that. Also, you want to have room for gifts you may receive and souvenirs of your visit. You might want to pack a collapsible bag for your purchases, one that can be checked for the return trip.

People do sometimes arrive at their city of destination without their luggage, so pack the survival things you will need for a couple of days in your carry-on. Be sure to put luggage tags on each bag, even the ones you do not plan on checking. Also put a label inside your bag in case the luggage tag is accidentally torn off.

Always remember to pack light – you will be responsible for movement of your own luggage. There are no porters on your journey. You could be walking up and down stairs carrying your luggage.

What to carry with you:

General:

- Airplane ticket or email confirmations.
- Passport – Also a photocopy of the page with your picture and passport number in a suitcase separate from where you carry your passport. *(Do not put your passport in your checked luggage!)*
- Backpack or large purse. Something larger than a small purse or fanny pack because that allows you to carry a water bottle, notebook and camera in addition to other normal purse contents. Be sure you can comfortably carry it when fully packed. Purse needs to fit closely to or around your body and close securely. Consider a rolling backpack for easier moving when on flat surfaces or carrying when on rocky surfaces.
- Notebook/Journal and Pens – You will use the notebook/journal for taking notes and also as your personal journal of your reflections on your experience. Be sure it will fit in your tote / purse / backpack and has a hard cover for easier writing.

- Addresses or a page of labels for those you want to send postcards or notes. Plus your return labels. These postcards make great souvenirs for those back home and are fun to receive when you return home.
- Camera, extra batteries and memory card for a digital camera, a memory stick and charger/extra battery pack. *ALWAYS ASK PERMISSION BEFORE PHOTOGRAPHING SOMEONE. IF YOU ARE PHOTOGRAPHING CHILDREN, GET PERMISSION FROM RESPONSIBLE ADULTS.* Remember, capturing the moment can be intrusive.
- Small flashlight (helpful)
- A small battery powered alarm clock/watch – the hotels/guest houses do not always have wake-up service and you may not have cell service.
- Devotional items: A small Bible and whatever you will need to lead worship when your turn comes, such as a poem or favorite reading. If you want to include a song, be sure to bring copies of the music.
- Snack Food – Our hosts will monitor our meals and assure our safety in every way. In case you get an upset stomach however, you may appreciate having a granola bar or crackers and these can easily be packed in your suitcase or carry-on. Snacks are always a good idea for your plane ride, long bus rides, and if you usually eat every two to three hours. You may bring extras to share.
- Hard candy to suck on can help in situations where your blood sugar drops.
- Extra Ziploc bags to use for packing souvenirs on the return trip.
- The electrical current can differ from the one at home. You can go to <http://www.trade.gov/mas/ian/ecw/all.html> to find out the electrical current specifications of the country you are visiting. You may need an adapter for hairdryers, curling irons, battery/phone chargers that have a round grounding pin or one taller/wider vertical blade. You can also consider a haircut that doesn't require electricity for styling.

Toiletries:

- Toilet Paper – You will definitely need to bring along small rolls of toilet paper. The full size rolls are not practical. Always carry some in your purse/bag because you may need it in public restrooms, behind trees or in the woods (not kidding!). Facilities vary by country.
- Your personal toiletries PLUS a small mirror because not all hotels will have mirrors. If bringing razors and tweezers be sure to pack them in your checked luggage.
- Soap/bath gel/shampoo/conditioner/shaving cream – not always supplied by the hotel/guest house. Many stores have wonderful fillable travel size bottles that will hold a two week supply of liquids (works for taking a little laundry detergent with you for hand washables).
- For the ladies: Sanitary supplies – Even if not needed for their original purpose, consider mini-pads as daily wear as a way to stay fresher on the trip.

- Hand towel and wash cloths – Bringing a hand towel can get you through emergency situations where a towel is not available and most non-USA hotels do not supply wash cloths.
- Waterless hand sanitizer, disinfectant wipes and Wet Ones. Consider a small pack of Wet Ones for every day of the trip (easier to carry in your tote/backpack).
- Earplugs – especially if you are a light sleeper.
- Glasses or contact lenses, cases, and saline solution– bring an extra pair of glasses or contacts, just in case. For contacts, bring extra cases already filled with saline solution in case you need to take them off in an emergency.

Medical and Sun Block Supplies:

- All of your prescription medications in the original bottles. Pack them in your carry-on bag in original containers.
- Your medical card and a listing of all your medications, allergies, etc.
- Diarrhea medication such as Imodium A-D. Your doctor can also prescribe an antimicrobial drug (Cipro) to shorten the length of any illness. A Z-Pack can be helpful, if your doctor will prescribe it for you. Ask.
- Motion sickness medication – bring some even if you think you will not need it. It can double as a sleep aide.
- Over the counter medications such as aspirin, vitamins, cortisone cream, antibiotic cream, sinus medication, allergy medications, sleeping aid, etc.

Clothing: Dress code and weather

- Please wear comfortable cotton clothes and shoes. Dress in layers. Think warmer during the day and cooler at night. You should not wear sleeveless tops. Khaki and capri pants are acceptable, and generally, casual is fine. You should all have a more formal outfit (not a suit) for church services and other formal meetings, and long skirts and maxi-dresses are appropriate.
- Be sure you can walk ALL day in your shoes. Wear cushiony socks.
- Jewelry – Leave your good jewelry home.
- Small umbrella – that folds and will fit in your tote / backpack.
- Gloves – international flights can be very chilly. The thin stretchy knit gloves can be very welcomed.
- Small pillow – for use on the flight and at night, if necessary.

Weather – Go to www.weather.com to learn about the weather conditions of the country you are visiting in order to pack the appropriate clothing. You will spend a considerable amount of time in outdoor activities.

Money and Gifts:

- Small sized bills - no larger than \$20. Even though your group expenses will be paid, you may want to have extra money to purchase additional snacks, tip someone for extra services provided to you, give church offerings, purchase souvenirs to take home, or just for incidentals. The plan is to make money changes at the airport, the first stop of the journey, unless the partner has another suggestion. The amount taken is your choice, but experience is in the \$150 to \$250 range. It depends on your personal spending habits.
- Credit/Debit cards: Please check with your bank or credit union to be sure everything is in order regarding your ATM or credit card. Let them know the dates you will be traveling and where. This will prevent their fraud alert company from thinking that your card has been stolen and freezing your card. Ask them what fees they charge for using the card internationally so you will not be surprised when you get your statement.
- Gifts for our in-field visits to children and programs: Please do not bring candy as handouts for children; it can increase the need for dental care in areas where that may not be available and/or affordable. Do not hand out money either. Trust your hosts' ability to decide how to help the community.

What to leave at home:

- A copy of your passport, visa, credit card(s), and ATM's (front & back) that you are taking with you.
- Emergency in-country phone number (will be provided) with your immediate family members.
- Office phone number of the People-to-People Pilgrimage Program, 317-713-2565, and email, lhernandez@dhm.disciples.org.
- Name and contact information of the group leader.
- Your cell phone - You are free to purchase an international cell phone or plan to call home, because you may not have regularly scheduled check-ins back home. If you do decide to bring your phone and you purchase an international plan, double check that your phone is the proper one for international service. Call your provider / check their website. Ask specifically how an international plan works for your phone and your carrier. General customer service may not know the answers to these questions, so ask for the international department.

Be sure you can carry whatever you bring for at least a block or two by yourself. And, be prepared to have a life changing experience!

UPON RETURN

We hope that your recent pilgrimage was a meaningful and life giving experience. People-to-People pilgrimages are an important part of developing relationships with international partners, and now that you are home, we hope that this letter will help you find ways to continue this connection. These relationships do not end with the conclusion of your visit, but they do take time, prayer, and effort to cultivate. There are many different ways that you can stay engaged with the work of our partners and Global Ministries.

One of the most important ways to strengthen the bond is through prayer. You can encourage your congregation to use prayers from the Global Ministries website, written by current mission co-workers, that address specific issues related to the partner and country you visited, or you can write your own. This is a powerful way to help relay the joys and concerns of those you met on your journey with people in your home congregation, region and conference.

Advocacy is another significant step in building a meaningful partnership, as it allows you to take action on issues. In addition to following news from the country you visited, consider taking a moment to read the People-to-People Advocacy Guide on the Global Ministries website to learn more about how you can be involved in efforts around these critical issues. While writing letters and signing petitions are important steps, advocacy can be as simple as lifting up a story you heard on your pilgrimage and connecting it to the life of your congregation.

As the relationship continues, you may even want to consider participating in another People-to-People trip or volunteering through Global Ministries Short-term or Long-term Volunteer programs by contacting the Mission Personnel Office. These opportunities range from as short as 2 weeks to as long as 4 years! This is one of the best ways to develop a deeper understanding and provides the chance to truly share in God's abundant life.

By providing special gifts, you and/or your local church can assist in expanding the exciting ministries that you learned about on your pilgrimage. You also may want to consider making a general gift to Global Ministries, as this allows funds to be allocated to where they are most needed as well as supporting ministries such as the People-to-People Pilgrimage Program. Learn more about sharing gifts with Global Ministries at <https://donate.globalministries.org/onlinegiving>. If you have any questions about continuing your journey, please do not hesitate to email or call. I pray that as you return to your daily routine, the spirit of God guide, nourish, and sustain these new friendships.

Sincerely,

Lorna Hernandez, Coordinator
People-to-People Pilgrimage Program
LHernandez@dom.disciples.org
317.713.2565

Thank you!

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www.globalministries.org

A common witness of the Division of Overseas
Ministries, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and
Wider Church Ministries, United Church of Christ



