

THE ROLE OF
SHORT-TERM MISSIONS
IN
OPC FOREIGN MISSIONS

David P. Nakhla

Short-term Missions Coordinator

THE ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

INTRO: STM TRAINING SESSION

- Purpose:
 - To assist in preparing short-term mission (STM) teams and individuals headed to serve OPC foreign mission fields.
- Scope:
 - This module is pre-field training that is focused on the following areas:
 - The Biblical mandate for missions
 - How STMs fit into this mandate
 - Ways to prepare before the STM trip
 - Things to anticipate during the STM trip
 - What to do after the STM trip

BACKGROUND: WHY MISSIONS?

- In the beginning, when God created man, he created man in his image:

“God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him.”
(Gen 1:27)

- Because of this relationship, man is created with one primary purpose:

“To glorify God and enjoy Him forever” (WSC #1)

- The Church has two primary purposes:

1.) To worship God.

2.) To help others worship him - *“proclaim that Jesus Christ came into the world to reconcile sinners to God so that they can worship and serve Him, the only true God.”* (Section 1.2 – Manual of the CFM)

---- MISSIONS!

BACKGROUND: HOW IS CHRIST INVOLVED?

- He has received the authority to send.

“And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.’” (Mt. 28:18)

- He has given the command to “Go!”

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.” (Mt. 28:19-20a)

- He has promised his abiding presence.

“And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Mt. 28:20b)

BACKGROUND: WHO SENDS MISSIONARIES?

- In the context of the church, the Holy Spirit calls missionaries to full-time service.

“While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’”
(Acts 13:2)

- The Church is the institution ordained by God to send out from its own those called to this important work.

“Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.” (Acts 13:3)

SHORT-TERM MISSIONS ON OPC FIELDS

Short-Term Teams work:

- At the invitation of the long-term missionaries.
- Doing the work they assign.
- Under their oversight.
- For the furtherance of the long-term work.
- The Long-Term work and relationships is the most important thing!

BEFORE YOU GO: SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

- Pray!
 - For the field
 - For the Lord's work in hearts (yours included!)
 - ...And gather a gang of prayer warriors
- Read your Bible!
 - Be immersed in the Word
 - Acts, Romans, & Ephesians are particularly relevant for missions and evangelism

BEFORE YOU GO: SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

- Grow in Evangelism
 - Learn some evangelism techniques (e.g. – Roman road, EE, etc.)
 - Write your own story or testimony
 - Practice asking questions
 - Have one key concept or one key verse (such as Eph. 2:8)
 - Practice evangelism today! How about one new person per day?
 - Prepare for limited language – keep it simple!
- Involve your Local Church
 - Seek the blessing of your pastor & elders
 - Ask them to pray for you and the team
 - Would they consider some sort of send-off or “commissioning”?
- Set clear Goals – personal and team

BEFORE YOU GO: PHYSICAL PREPARATION

- Read about the field
 - Its culture
 - Its history
 - The history of the OPC's work there.
 - The climate (helps to pack correctly)
 - The predominate religions - can anticipate objections to the gospel
 - The mission or missionary can help point to helpful resources.
- Connect with your team

BEFORE YOU GO: PHYSICAL PREPARATION

- Learn some basics of the local language
 - “Hello”
 - “Good-bye”
 - “Thank you”
 - “God bless you”
 - And the all important: “Where is the restroom?”
- Begin to Journal
 - Anticipations, reactions, serious, humorous, reflections
 - Best thing today
 - Most difficult today
 - Did for first time today
 - One spiritual lesson today
- If at all possible, get some rest before the trip!

DURING THE STM: AVOID SOME STM WOES

- Having a “Savior Complex” – We are here to save you!
 - We are all in need of grace; by God’s grace we are broken people going to serve broken people.
- Committing cultural Faux Pas
 - Follow the lead of our in-country hosts
- Disregarding the input and/or oversight of the missionaries
 - This increases the chances of offending
- Doing *for*, not *with*
 - Creates unhealthy dependency

DURING THE STM: AVOID SOME STM WOES

- The trip is not about you, the adventure, or even the project!
 - It is about relationships!
 - With God
 - With each other
 - With those you seek to serve
 - ...and, ultimately, with Christ
- Remember: Your actions speak louder than words.
 - *How* you act (and react) will have a more lasting impact than *what* “work” you accomplish!

DURING THE STM: STM KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Pray Continually!
- Be Flexible!
- No Complaining!
 - *“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me!”* (Phil 2:15)
- Develop a Servant’s Heart!
- Be a Learner!
- Practice Humility!

AFTER THE STM: SOME “TO DO’S”

- Determine 3 “take-aways” from the STM trip...before you leave the field!
- Reflect on what the Lord taught you about the field...and about yourself.
 - Hopefully it proves to be a transforming experience.
- Consider your preparation – what could I improve?

AFTER THE STM: SOME “TO DO’S”

- Assemble a presentation for church & others
- Report to supporters what you learned
- Commit to continue to pray for the field and for your new friends
- Consider how you might be useful to the field in the future...and more useful at your home church!

AS YOU GO...

SCRIPTURE PROMISES TO REMEMBER

- *“I am with you always, to the very end of the age”* (Mt. 28:20)
- *“When I am weak, then I am strong”* (2 Cor. 12:10)
- *“The Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say.”* (Lk. 12:12)
- *“Where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am also”*
(Mt 18:20)

Go in the strength of the Lord!

May He richly bless you in this endeavor!!

I'M HERE TO HELP!

Please feel free to contact me directly:

David P. Nakhla

David.Nakhla@opc.org

Cell: (562) 760-7606

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