

TRAINING SESSIONS



TRAINING SESSION 1

Welcome to your first training session! Our team is thankful for your willingness to serve and share the gospel, and we look forward to seeing what God does through your team during your mission trip. These sessions are intended to help guide and prepare your team members' hearts for the ministry you are about to do. Each session is designed with a few articles that your team is intended to read before you gather together for a training session. When your team comes together to go over the material, ask your team members what they learned from each article and talk through them; our "conversation points" below can help guide the discussion as well. In session 1, we provide a prayer guide showing ways to pray before, during, and after your trip. We encourage you to print this guide out and keep it close by so your group can be praying over these things regularly as your trip approaches.

With each of the four training sessions, we have supplied article excerpts, prep documents, and time to reflect on Scripture and pray as a team. The goal of this first meeting is to highlight the Biblical foundation for missions. We also want to begin challenging and shaping the way that your team prays for this trip, and we encourage you to continue applying these principles in the weeks to come.

Included in the first session are the following pieces:

- Trip Expectations, *Servant Life Field Manual*
- Article: "There Is No Greater Satisfaction" by John Piper
- Prayer Guide
- Scripture Review: Matthew 28:18-20
- Scripture Memorization: John 14:6
- Prayer (using the outline in the prayer guide)

Conversation Points:

Trip Expectations article

- Why is it important not to set unreasonable expectations?
- How should Colossians 3:23 change the way that we serve?
- It sounds crazy to say we should *expect* difficulties. But why is this mindset important?
- How can our attitude toward difficulties be part of our witness to those around us?

There is No Greater Satisfaction: A God-Centered Motivation for World Missions, John Piper

- What stood out to you from this article?
- Why does Piper say that the missions is not the goal of the church? What does he mean?
- Why is the concept of duty vs. delight important to consider?
- If missions is about the glory of God, how does this change the way we understand missions?
- Should we evaluate success based on results or based on faithfulness to God? Why?

Conversation Points Continued:

Scripture: Matthew 28:18-20

- Did you know that every gospel has a “Great Commission” like this? Check out Mark 16:15-16, Luke 24:26-29, and John 20:19-23. How does that help us understand the importance of missions?
- It is possible to read this text purely as a command— or a duty— but after reading the Piper article, is it also possible to delight in this command?
- Notice how Jesus promises to be with us as we “go.” Why is that important for us to remember?
- What is the goal of our “going”?

Scripture Memorization: John 14:6

- Practice saying the verse out loud a few times and see if any students can repeat it back to you.
- Encourage your students to continue working on memorizing this verse!
- How does this verse tie in to the Great Commission?
- How does this verse differ from other religious beliefs you may come across?

Prayer Guide

- Samuel Zwemer, who served as a missionary to Muslims, made the following statement: “The history of missions is the history of answered prayer... All human means are secondary.” Do you agree with him about the importance of prayer? Will you commit to praying for this trip?
- Pray that God would go before you and prepare the hearts of those who will hear the gospel. Pray that God would also prepare your hearts to go serve and be a witness.

Servant Life would like to thank the Church at Brook Hills for sharing some of these training documents with us!

Trip Expectations

What are your expectations for this missions experience?

By now you have probably spent some time imagining what your mission trip will be like. You have thought about what the culture will look like, how the food will taste, what type of work you will be doing, and many other aspects of your trip.

There is nothing wrong with having expectations, but we have to hold on to them loosely. Mission trips never go exactly as planned and foreigners often have a difficult time imagining what life in another country, or even a sub-culture in their own country, will be like before they experience it. There is a good chance that many of your expectations will not be a reality, especially if this is your first time serving in another context.

It is crucial to begin a mission trip with proper expectations. Consider this equation: **if (Expectations \neq Reality); then (Reality = Frustration)**. Don't spend the first few days of your trip unlearning what you expected to be true prior to the trip and getting frustrated as a result. But even worse, you could miss the point of the trip altogether.

The purpose of missions is to glorify God by making disciples of Jesus Christ. Therefore, you should expect:

To serve missionaries and the local church

- Making disciples takes longer than a week, therefore, Servant Life partners with missionaries and the local churches to create long-term ministry strategies. Making-disciples is about sharing life in Christ with others. A short-term team can establish great initial connections or even deepen the faith of the local church, but the ministry must extend past the 7-10 days your team is on the ground. In order to make disciples, we support the missionaries and the local church in their mission.
- In Matthew 20:28, Jesus tells us that, *"the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."* This is what we are called to do as those who follow Christ. We are not heroes coming to save the world in a week. We come humbly with a heart to serve the Church in the way that will best help them in their ministry.

This heart of service may lead you to cleaning toilets, washing clothes, or mopping floors, but know that, *"whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ."* (Colossians 3:23-24)

To share your faith

- As we "go and make disciples" we must proclaim the Good News.
 - For *"everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."* How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, *"How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!"* (Romans 10:13-15)
- Paul says that we must be sent and we must preach so the nations will believe and call on the name of The Lord for salvation.

To experience difficulty

- In John 16:33 Jesus says, *"I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."* We are promised difficulty in this world. Since the fall of man this world has been warring against man. When we take mission trips, we do not escape the sin of this world. In fact, when the Church is proclaiming the Gospel we often enter dark places and Satan is working much harder to distract us. Go into this trip expecting to experience difficulty, but know that our God is bigger than delayed flights, broken down vehicles, the weather, or any other obstacle that you may encounter.

To grow

- We have never known a person to leave a mission experience the same as they began it. Mission trips can forever alter your world-view as you become aware of the physical, spiritual, and social needs of the world. Expect to grow in your knowledge of the world you live in. Expect to grow in your love for The Lord and His people. Expect to be changed.

Pray that God will give you proper expectations for your missions experience. Pray daily throughout the trip that He will give you wisdom and discernment to handle everything that comes your way. Trust that He will never leave you, nor forsake you.

"Be still and know that I am God"
(Psalm 46:10)

“There Is No Greater Satisfaction – A God Centered Motivation For World Missions” by John Piper

Duty is good. But delight is better. Picture me bringing a dozen roses home to my wife on our wedding anniversary. I hold them out to her at the door, she smiles and says, “Oh, Johnny, they’re beautiful, why did you?” Suppose I lift my hand in a self-effacing gesture and say, “It’s my duty.” So what’s wrong? Is duty a bad thing? No, it’s not a bad thing. But it can only take you so far. If you want romance, duty won’t reach. The right answer to my wife’s question goes like this: “I couldn’t help myself. My happiness just got out of hand. In fact, to make my day, I’d really enjoy asking you out tonight.”

The amazing thing about this answer is that it does two things that many people think won’t fit together. It expresses my happiness and makes her feel honored. A lot of people think that if I do something because it makes me happy, it can’t honor another person. But it can! Why? Because delighting in someone is a very high compliment. If you enjoy someone, two amazing things happen: you get the joy, they get the glory. Pleasure is the measure of your treasure. This is a revolutionary insight in relation to God. Here’s what it means: God is most glorified in you when you are most satisfied in Him. This is a radically life-changing discovery. It means that the pursuit of God’s glory and the pursuit of your joy are not at odds. They are, in fact, one.

The chief end of man is to glorify God BY enjoying Him forever. Not by enjoying money and comfort and prestige and power and achievement, but by enjoying HIM, God – and every other good thing for God’s sake. As St. Augustine prayed, “He loves you too little who loves anything together with you, which he loves not for your sake.” The Biblical command, “Delight yourself in the Lord,” (Psalm 37:4) is another way of saying, “Do all to the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31). God is most glorified in you when you are most satisfied in Him.

And the greatest passion of God’s heart is to be glorified. He created us for His glory (Isaiah 43:7); He called Israel to be His people for His glory (Isaiah 49:3); Jesus lived (John 17:4) and died (John 12:27-28;

Romans 3:25-26) and rose (Romans 6:4) and reigns (Philippians 2:11) for the glory of God; He chose us before the foundation of the world for His glory (Ephesians 1:4-6;); He forgives us for His glory (Psalm 25:11; Isaiah 43:25); He works through us for His glory (1 Peter 4:11); He calls us to do all things for His glory (1 Corinthians 10:31); and His aim is that the earth will be covered with the knowledge of His glory the way the waters cover the sea (Habakkuk 2:14), and in the age to come that the glory of the Lord alone will be the awesome light of endless days (Revelation 21:23).

If the glory of God is the highest passion of His own heart, then it should be the highest passion of ours. And if God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him, then we should spare nothing to maximize our joy in Him. But where is this maximum joy to be found? Well, we have already said it: in God! Yes, but here we can make a very subtle and devastating mistake. Be careful. There is something about the nature of true joy that is restless. It is expansive by nature. It wants out. Imagine me at my son’s soccer championship, and someone saying to me, “You are permitted to have all the pleasure you want in your son’s performance, but you may not express any of it verbally or physically.” Would my joy be full? No. There is something about joy that comes to consummation when it gets out. Joy gets bigger by expanding. Joy increases by extending itself to others. My gladness gets bigger when it becomes your gladness.

This means that the human quest for joy leads straight to the missionary heart of God. You can see it already. But let me put it together. God is the fountain of joy because He is blindingly glorious, and infinitely worthy, and breathtakingly beautiful, and awesome in power, and inscrutable in wisdom, and limitless in knowledge, and tender in mercy, and terrible in wrath, and the source and foundation of all truth and goodness and beauty. When we see Him for who He really is, and turn from all the broken cisterns of the world that cannot satisfy (Jeremiah 2:13), we find “joy unspeakable and full of glory” (1 Peter 1:8).

But this joy, like all joy, wants out. It wants to expand. If it doesn't extend itself and overflow, it begins to stagnate. There is something about God that cannot be hoarded. And to hoard joy in God is to lose joy in God. But to lose joy in God is to dishonor God—just like my wife would be dishonored if I said, "It's my duty." God is most glorified in you when you are most satisfied in Him.

Therefore our joy must get out—for God's sake and for our sake. God wills for His glory to be reflected in the joy of redeemed people from every tribe and tongue and nation (Revelation 7:9). He wills worldwide praise. *Therefore world evangelization is the pathway to maximum joy and maximum worship.* Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. The glory of God is the ultimate goal of the church—because it's the ultimate goal of God. The final goal of all things is that God might be worshipped with white-hot affection by a redeemed company of countless persons from every tribe and tongue and people and nation (Revelation 5:9; 7:9). Missions exists because worship doesn't. When the kingdom finally comes in glory, missions will cease. Missions is penultimate, worship is ultimate. If we forget this and reverse their roles the passion and the power for both diminish.

J. Campbell White, the secretary of the Laymen's Missionary Movement wrote in 1909: "Most men are not satisfied with the permanent output of their lives. Nothing can wholly satisfy the life of Christ within His followers except the adoption of Christ's purpose toward the world He came to redeem. Fame, pleasure and riches are but husks and ashes in contrast with the boundless and abiding joy of working with God for the fulfillment of His eternal plans. The men who are putting everything into Christ's undertaking are getting out of life its sweetest and most priceless rewards."

This is the testimony of virtually all the great missionaries in the history of the church. Pouring out their lives brought their lives back to them. They proved again and again the words of the Lord, "He who loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will

save it" (Mark 8:38). In other words, joy in God grows by expanding toward others. Jesus said to Peter, "There is no one who has left house or brother or sister or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life" (Mark 10:29-30). You can't out-give God.

On December 4, 1857, David Livingstone, the great pioneer missionary to Africa, made a stirring appeal to the students of Cambridge University, showing what he had learned about these words of Jesus through the years: "For my own part, I have never ceased to rejoice that God has appointed me to such an office. People talk of the sacrifice I have made in spending so much of my life in Africa... Is that a sacrifice which brings its own blest reward in healthful activity, the consciousness of doing good, peace of mind, and a bright hope of a glorious destiny hereafter? It is emphatically no sacrifice. Say rather it is a privilege. Anxiety, sickness, suffering, or danger, now and then, with a foregoing of the common conveniences and charities of this life, may make us pause, and cause the spirit to waver, and the soul to sink; but let this only be for a moment. All these are nothing when compared with the glory which shall be revealed in and for us. I never made a sacrifice."

And in saying that, Livingstone paid his God the highest tribute possible. It was not mere duty. It was a profound delight - beyond what anything in this world can give. God was glorified in him because he was satisfied in God. And his satisfaction came to consummation not with the comforts of cozy life in England, but with the expansive vision of giving his life and his joy away on the frontiers. That's it. That's the most profound, God centered motivation. It makes my heart beat faster even as I think about it again. O, may God give us eyes to see where true satisfaction can be found—to the glory of God!

For an expanded discussion on God's Glory as the motivation for missions and personal devotion, check out John Piper's book, *Let the Nations Be Glad* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House), 1993.

Prayer Guide

Ways to Pray Before, During, and After Your Trip

Before the Trip:

Pray That...

- God would be glorified and honored in every aspect of the trip
- Each team member, as well as our field and national partners would have a personal and powerful encounter with God
- God would unify our team around a common purpose and goal
- Each member of the team would lay down their own desires and yield to the Holy Spirit's leading
- God would go before us in preparing the hearts of those who will hear the gospel

During the Trip:

Pray That...

- God would give our team boldness and sense of urgency on a daily basis
- God would give us a spirit of humility and flexibility as we serve and encourage our mission partners
- God would soften the hearts of those we are ministering to, that they might respond to the gospel
- God would bless us with good health and adequate amounts of rest throughout the trip
- God would keep our minds focused on the task at hand and free from any distractions

After the Trip:

Pray That...

- God will provide opportunities for team members to share how this trip impacted their lives
- Based on this trip, that the team members will live out the gospel with a renewed sense of urgency back in their home context

Scripture Review

Matthew 28:18-20

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Scripture Memorization

John 14:6

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

TRAINING SESSION 2

In this training session, the goal is to focus on spiritual preparation. By reading and applying these article excerpts and practicing to share your faith, we pray that you grow in your relationship with Christ and your ability to share the gospel. We want you to be sent out on mission with confidence to proclaim the gospel!

Included in the second session are the following pieces:

- Scripture Review: Acts 1:6-8
- Scripture Memorization: Romans 10:9-10
- How to Share Your Faith / Build Your Testimony, *Servant Life Field Manual*
 - Then practice sharing your faith with one another using these tools
- Article: "Extravagant Daily Time with Jesus" by Dick Brogden
- Article: "Abiding Leads to Fruit" by Dick Brogden
- Prayer

Conversation Points:

Scripture: Acts 1:6-8

- Why does Jesus connect the coming of the Holy Spirit with his charge to send them to the ends of the earth?
- How does the role of the Holy Spirit change our understanding of missions?
- Can we be "productive" in missions apart from the Spirit's power?

Scripture Memorization: Romans 10:9-10

- Read the verse together and see if any team members can recite it from memory.
- How can this verse help you in sharing the Gospel?

How to Share Your Faith

- After working through these categories, have students practice sharing their faith with each other using these categories to build your testimony.

Abiding Leads to Fruit

- What stood out to you from this article?
- What are the two basic components of abiding in Christ? Do you practice these?
- How is abiding in Christ related to missions?

Conversation Points Continued:

Extravagant Daily Time with Jesus

- For most of us, it's overwhelming to think about trying to spend this much time with God, but this time commitment doesn't develop overnight. How can you start making strides in this direction? What spiritual disciplines can you start applying?
- How does the role of the Holy Spirit change our understanding of missions?

Prayer

- Pray that each team member would yield their desires, thoughts, and lives to the leading of the Holy Spirit.
- Jesus teaches us to pray according to the will of God, pray that His will be done before, during, and after your trip.

Scripture Review

Acts 1:6-8

So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Scripture Memorization

Romans 10:9-10

If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

How To Share Your Faith

Our team at Servant Life feels that it is not only for your benefit, but also our responsibility to make sure that you have a clear understanding of the gospel and how to share it. After all, if we are going to make disciples, we need to be able to tell others what that means. We believe that your ability to articulate the gospel and share your testimony is not just something you should rehearse before a mission trip, but something you are prepared to do at all times as a Christ-follower.

Below is a guide to help you prepare how to share your testimony with the essential elements of the gospel. On a mission trip you might not have extended time to lay out the full story of salvation with those you encounter. It is important that you are able to share the Gospel in both short and extended versions. We ask that you take the needed time to seriously work through the following questions. We know that it is the work of the Holy Spirit that brings about new life through Christ, but we have the responsibility to share God's good news and make disciples (Mt 28:18-20, Acts 1:8-9 & Luke 24:44-49). Our hope is that this exercise will not only prepare you, but also remind you of the goodness of God's grace through the work of Christ (Eph. 1:18-21 & 2:4-10). We look forward to hearing how God uses your testimony in the life of others!

PART ONE: THE GOSPEL

Use these five elements of God's story to write the Gospel in your own words:

The Character of God
(1 John 1:5-10, Ephesians 2:1-10)

Write the Biblical truth about the character of God found in this passage:

The Sinfulness of Man
(1 John 1:5-10, Ephesians 2:1-10, Romans 3:23, 6:23)

Write the Biblical truth found in these passages:

The Sufficiency of Christ
(1 John 1:5-10, Ephesians 2:1-10)

Write the Biblical truth found in these passages

The Necessity of Faith
(1 John 1:5-10, Ephesians 2:1-10, Romans 10:9-13)
Write the Biblical truth found in these passages:

The Urgency of Eternity
(Ephesians 2:1-3, Romans 6:23)
Write the Biblical truth found in this passage:

Write in your own words (100 words or less) the five biblical truths studied above:

PART TWO: SHARING MY STORY

Work through the following questions to help you simply and clearly share your story.

I was awakened to my need for a Savior by (people, circumstances, books, awareness of a specific sin, etc.):

I realized that God is:
(how does God feel about your sin?)

I realized that I was separated from
God because:

I came to understand that Christ:

I responded to the good news of
Christ's death and resurrection by:

PART THREE: PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Using the five elements of the Gospel and the previous questions just answered, use the following space to share your story and the gospel. The goal is to be able to clearly articulate the Gospel and your story within 60 seconds.

“Abiding Leads to Fruit” by Dick Brogden

Extravagant daily time with Jesus— This is the center of **abiding**. Not legalism, not dry discipline, not manufactured spirituality, but joyous soaking in the presence of Jesus, lavish spending of time with Him who is most precious, Him from whom all life flows. In a world that is over connected yet lonely, frantically busy yet accomplishing little of eternal value, super informed but egregiously ignorant on what really matters, abiding is a call to give Jesus the best of our time that He in turn leads us to the best of times.

God’s Heartbeat. The Bible is a missiological masterpiece. From Beginning to end, God unveils his grand design to be glorified by every tribe, tongue, people, and nation. Missions is not a New Testament addition. Missions is God’s heartbeat from Genesis to Revelation.

The Gospel of John is no exception. John is full of non-Jews finding the Savior of the world. John repeats a “sending” motif: Jesus sent by the Father to save sinners, the disciples sent by Jesus to make disciples of all nations. By the time we get to John 15, Jesus is at the end of his earthly ministry. The teaching of Jesus in John 15 takes place on the night He is arrested in Gethsemane. He is giving His disciples one last charge. He is pouring out His heart as to what is important. John uses the metaphor of the vine in harvest mode. Jesus is life (the vine), the Father sustains the vine and the vineyard, and the disciples are the branches. Branches are intended to bear fruit (other disciples), and are guaranteed to do so if they abide. Bearing fruit is in fact guaranteed (John 15:5) if the disciples abide. Let’s look at the text to see what it teaches on the nature of abiding and fruit.

Abiding. The Greek word for abiding (meno) is connected to the Latin maneo— meaning “house.” From it we derive the English word “mansion.” Abiding means to remain in one place, at a given time, with someone, to dwell with someone. John uses meno to express a reciprocal indwelling: We are in Jesus and Jesus is in us. We linger in Him and He lingers in us. We live in Him and He lives in us. He is the source of life, He is the sap, and this interaction is both constant and with special times of union. It is both the journey and the destination. *Abiding is elongated, patient waiting in the presence of Jesus. Abiding is extravagant (concentrated) daily times with Jesus and all-day awareness. Abiding is constant communion in the midst of a crowded world and busy life and unique times of sweet, exclusive fellowship . Abiding implies extravagance.*

When John uses “meno,” there is always a sense of endurance, continuance, tarrying, and waiting with expectancy over time. Men and women of God through the centuries have lived out this abiding truth. There are no heroes of the faith who did not live out this extravagant lavishing of their time on Jesus. When we examine their private lives, we see that they needed to abide for strength and wisdom. They were addicted to extravagant time in the presence of Jesus because it gave them life and joy and was the only thing that fulfilled them. Abiding is both active and passive. Abiding is passive in the sense that Jesus pursues us and invites us to rest in His presence. Abiding is active in the reality that the spiritual disciplines position us to receive the life of Jesus—His heavenly sap. Discipline leads us to desire, which matures into delight.

Fruit. The Greek word for fruit is “karpos.” Scholars have assigned various meanings to fruit according to context, including Christ like character, confession of Christ’s name in praise, contribution to those in need, conduct in general, and as those converted through one’s witness. The New Testament has a variety of of understandings for “fruit.” John, however, has a distinct and sharply focused use of the word. Of the eleven uses of “karpos” in John (ten are in John 15 and one is in John 4), all can be understood to be in the context of harvest. “Karpos” literally means “that which is harvested—harvest, crop, fruit, grain.” The sense is an external yield that can be gathered. While not unique in the New Testament in this regard, John — especially in chapter 15 of his Gospel—seems to emphasize that the fruit of abiding is a harvest of people.

Building Blocks. There is no standardized formula for abiding, but Scripture and the biographies of men and women through the ages points us to two non-negotiables: The Word of God and prayer. *Extended daily time in the Word and in the presence of Jesus through prayer are the basic building blocks of abiding.*

Jesus spent close to 90 percent of His life in a village of twelve families, and even His three years of ministry were characterized by time alone with the Father. Moses spent forty years in Midian and had multiple trips to the mountain with

God. Paul spent thirteen years in preparation, some of it in the Arabian Desert, and prayed constantly. Adam, Joseph, David, Elijah, Daniel, Mary, John, and others all gave God extravagant time. When we examine the lives of any heroes of the faith, we can see that they lingered daily with Jesus.

David Livingstone, the nineteenth century pioneer medical missionary, once said, "Shall I tell you what sustained me amidst the trials and hardships and loneliness of my exiled life? . . . It was a promise, the promise of a gentleman of the sacred honor. It was the promise: 'Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.'" John York, no stranger to pressure, dying too young from leukemia, expounds on Livingstone's thought and reminds us, "There is no 'Go' without 'Lo.'" First we are called to Jesus; He is with us always, and we with Him, then we go . . . to the uttermost parts and pressures of the earth. At Livingstone's death, his body was found bent in prayer, kneeling at his bed. His Bible was open to Matthew 28. In the margin was this small notation: "The word of a Gentleman."

Eric Liddell of "Chariots on Fire" won a gold medal in the 1924 Olympics in the 400 meters—an event he had not trained for but ran in because his favorite event, the 100 meter dash, was scheduled to be run on Sunday. In 1925, Liddell went to China as a missionary. He was arrested by the Japanese occupiers and incarcerated in a concentration camp. A fellow prisoner watched him die and noted: "What was his secret? He unreservedly committed his life to Jesus Christ as his Savior and Lord. That friendship meant everything to him. By the flickering light of a peanut-oil lamp early each morning, he studied the Bible and talked with God an hour every day. As a Christian, Eric Liddell's desire was to know God more deeply; and as a missionary, to make him known more fully."

George Muller is famed for a life of prayer, trusting God to provide food and finances for the hundreds of children sheltered in his orphanages. Mueller said, "I look upon it as a lost day when I have not had a good time over the Word of God." When Mueller was in his eighties, he was asked by a group of seminary students, "Mr. Mueller . . . what is your secret?" He pushed his chair back and began to bend his old limbs to the floor as he knelt in prayer. "This," he said, "this is the secret."

The Proof of Discipleship. In John 15, John introduces three branches. The first branch (15:2a) is in Christ but not producing disciples. That branch will be nurtured and taught to abide so that divine life will flow and disciples will be made. The second branch (15:2b) is the disciple of Christ who does make disciples. This disciple is disciplined (pruned), allowed to pass through difficulty and suffering, that he or she might be even more effective in making disciples. The third branch (15:6) is the disciple who does not lavish on Jesus extravagant daily time. Branches are not forced to abide. We are not forced to spend extravagant daily time with Jesus, but if we don't we will become so dry that we separate from the vine. We will be burned (disposed of) as we are not accomplishing our intended purpose (bearing disciples) and so are good for nothing.

In Jesus' missiological thinking, disciples are sent to harvest disciples. The power to harvest disciples comes from giving extravagant time to Jesus on a daily basis in order to draw life from Him. Disciples who do not lavish extravagant daily time on Jesus will not harvest disciples, and the Father then lifts them out of ministry so they can learn to abide in Him—this is the first branch. Disciples who do not respond to this grace period, this invitation to focus on drawing life from Jesus, eventually become hard, stiff, and resistant to God's overtures, so He lets them fall to the ground where they wither and disconnect themselves from the vine. There is nothing left for them but to be gathered and burned. Disciples who lavish extravagant daily time on Jesus will harvest disciples, and their reward is the joy of participating in the sufferings of Christ with the purpose of being used to bring even more disciples into the Kingdom.

When the Word of God abides in us, then our prayers are answered. This prayer, according to Jesus, is inescapably linked to mission. "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you (John 15:16)." John Piper writes, "Notice the amazing logic of this verse . . . He gave them a mission 'in order that' the Father would have prayers to answer. This means that prayer is for mission. It is designed to advance the kingdom." The Greek text in John 15:8 indicates a process: As we obey God and make disciples, we become disciples. Making disciples is then, in essence, proof that we are disciples. Our own discipleship is an ongoing formation, and as we glorify the Father—by abiding in Jesus, allowing His Word to abide in us, praying for the things on His heart, and bearing many new disciples—we both are and increasingly become His disciples.

“Extravagant Daily Time with Jesus” by Brogden

You believe in a financial tithe. All your resources belong to God, and you return to Him a portion of what is already His. What about your time? Does it all belong to God? Should the principle of tithing apply to your time? How extravagant are you toward Jesus with your time? Do you lavish time on Jesus? Do you give Jesus the most energetic and focused times of your day? Or do you tend to give Jesus the crumbs of your schedule? Here is what I enjoy doing in my abiding time:

Prayer

I have never been particularly good at sitting and praying. I need to pace, move, pray out loud - otherwise I get distracted; so I start my abiding time with a run - literally. I run two miles and then walk home. As I walk, I pray. I usually pray through the points of the well-known acronym ACTS:

- Adoration: I praise Jesus, love Him, exalt Him, worship Him for who He is, who the Bible says He is.

- Confession: I confess my sin and failures. I also confess who God is. I recite the Apostles Creed. I often do this out loud - confessing to the powers in heaven and the homies on the bike path the wonders of who Jesus is.

- Thanksgiving: I thank Jesus for His created world, for friends, family, favor, health, blessings. For the Holy Spirit, for the prevailing blood, for the Word, for all He has done and all He is.

- Supplication: I make my petitions known to God.

Bible Reading

For my time in the Word, I daily read six chapters: three chapters from the Old Testament, one from the Psalms, one from the Gospels, and one from the Epistles. I mark up my Bible like crazy, make notes in the margins, and try to summarize one key thought on top of each column. This usually takes about an hour.

Supplemental Reading

I often read from a devotional or spiritual classic. Francois Fenelon, Oswald Chambers, Richard Foster, and C.S. Lewis are all favorites.

Memorization

I try to spend about five minutes a day memorizing Scripture.

Praise

I end my time by banging out some hymns and choruses on the piano. I sing and express my adoration to Jesus in somewhat off-key enthusiasm.

Dick Brogden has been living and working among Muslims in North Africa since 1992.

TRAINING SESSION 3

In this training session, the goal is to begin covering cross-cultural training in addition to continued spiritual preparation. You will continue to learn about sharing your faith based on the example of Christ, and you will also be challenged to think about the importance of respecting culture.

Included in the third session are the following pieces:

- Customs & Cultural Guidelines
- Scripture Review: John 20:21-22
- Scripture Memorization: John 3:16
- 7 Ways to Make a Fool of Yourself
- Book Digest: "Cross-Cultural Servanthood," by Duane Elmer
- Article: Witness Well to Anybody, Anywhere, Anytime
- Prayer
- Loving Muslims

Conversation Points:

Customs & Cultural Guidelines

- What stood out to you? Which of these cultural differences might be hard for you to get used to?
- Why should we as Christians seek to show respect toward other people's customs?
- John 1:14 says that Jesus was full of grace AND truth. How can we be gracious toward those who are different from us, while also remaining firm on the truth of the gospel? What does this look like?

Scripture Review

- How does this verse remind us that we are "sent" into the world? What does it mean to be sent?
- Who is our example in being sent? What can we learn from his example?

Scripture Memorization: John 3:16

- Read the verse together and see if any team members can recite it from memory.
- How does this verse clearly depict the gospel?
- How could this verse be helpful if you get into a gospel conversation with someone?

7 Ways to Make a Fool of Yourself

- What is one new thing you learned from this list?
- Is it possible that acting foolishly can harm our gospel witness?

Cross-Cultural Servanthood, Book Digest

- What is one principle you learned about the concept of servanthood?
- In what practical ways can you grow in the areas of openness, acceptance, trust, learning, understanding, and serving?

Conversation Points Continued:

Witness Well to Anybody, Anywhere, Anytime

- What is one gospel-sharing tip you learned from this article?
- Is there one of these areas that you struggle in more than others? For many of us, it's "Getting to the point." If we never transition to spiritual matters, we never get to share Christ. How can you grow in your weak area? Pray for boldness? Practice sharing?

Prayer

- Pray that each team member, as well as our field and national partners would have a personal and powerful encounter with God.
- Pray that the Holy Spirit would move through you and guide your ministry as you go.
- Pray that God would open your heart and teach you to love His people.

Loving Muslims

- "Allah" is the Arabic word for "god." Is Islam's Allah the same god as the God of the Bible?
- What are some differences in the ways Muslims view salvation compared to the Christian's view?
- Are Muslims more respectful of Islam than Christians are of Christianity?
- In what ways have Christians been poorly portrayed throughout history? Compare those to the way Muslims are often portrayed in news reports today.

Customs & Cultural Guidelines

- Other cultures are generally not strict about time. They value flexibility and hospitality over rigid schedules and appointments. They are people-oriented, not task-oriented like Westerners tend to be. It does not mean they are disrespectful or wrong— they may simply value the things in front of them, whereas you may be inclined to drop all of those things in order to be on time.
- Communication is often less direct in other cultures. People don't necessarily say what they think outright, and might be offended if they are criticized directly. Indirect communication might be received better, especially when direct communication might cause shame or embarrassment.
- Other cultures often have a strong belief in the supernatural. This could come in the form of spirits, angels (or jinn), voodoo, and superstitions.
- Religion and politics are not taboo subjects and are often discuss-ed. It is best to avoid offering your opinion in these controversial situations as a short-term outsider, unless you are consulted. If you are asked about religion and have an opportunity to share Christ, attempt to do so in a God-honoring manner.
- Most cultures are very respectful to people based on age and title, whereas Westerners tend to respect people based on achievement.
- In many cultures most everything is done with the right hand (eating, handing over money or things, etc.). The left hand is considered unclean. Always use the right hand for waving, pointing or getting someone's attention.
- Shaking hands is done between members of the same sex. If a woman offers her hand to a man he may shake it, but men usually do not offer their hand to a woman.
- Shoes are often removed before entering a home. It is best to ask before dragging your dirty shoes through someone's home.
- When visiting a Muslim home, you may be seated on the floor. Men and women sit separately. Men sit with their legs crossed and women sit with their legs back to one side. Do not prop your feet up on anything such as a desk or coffee table. In some cultures it is rude for the bottom of your foot to be pointed at someone.
- It is considered polite to give a small gift after staying in someone's home. This is given at the end of the stay and is not opened in front of the giver. It is a good idea to bring some small gifts from the US to give to friends when leaving.

Scripture Review

John 20:21-22

"Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit."

Scripture Memorization

John 3:16

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

7 Ways to Make a Fool of Yourself

1. Dressing immodestly. People often expect Westerners to do this, and they will associate you with the pop culture stars they see on social media. Change their expectations by dressing modestly and show that you are different. Failure to do so may significantly harm your opportunity to share Christ with them. If your attire is not respectful, why should they respect your gospel message?
2. Handing someone money, gifts, or anything with your left hand. In many cultures the left hand is considered unclean. If you are left-handed, you are probably fine to eat and write and do normal things, but be careful in the ways that you use your left hand to interact with others.
3. Disparaging someone's religion. Putting down someone's religion is the quickest way to break harmony and cause someone to put up walls. You may lose your opportunity to have meaningful, Christ-centered conversations with them.
4. Wearing shoes inside a house. In many contexts, no one wants your dirty shoes on their floor. Consider the dirt and things you walked through outside, and then consider that people might be eating on that floor. This same principle applies for places of worship too (mosques, temples, etc.).
5. Touching in public between opposite sexes will often get a glowering stare from the locals... and in extreme cases, even the local police (just ask the tourists put in jail for PDA a few years back). Even if you are married, watch how you interact with your spouse.
6. Refusing to eat food given to you. It's okay to not like something, but at least try to eat some of it as a sign of respect. You may even end up liking it. If you are in a non-sterile environment and concerned your body might not react positively to the food, ask the local missionary if it is ok to consume. Consider eating a very small portion in this case.
7. Being a loud Westerner. Loud people are looked down on in many cultures. Being perceived as obnoxious will certainly not help your witness.

The truth is, at some point you probably will make a fool of yourself— and that's ok! But being aware of some of these things may help you avoid common mistakes. At the end of the day mistakes will happen, but we don't want you to do anything that might hinder your opportunity to share the gospel with people!

Book Digest of “Cross Cultural Servanthood” by Duane Elmer

Duane Elmer is Professor of International Studies at TrinityEvangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois. Elmer has lots of wisdom and experience in international contexts. He spent four years as a professor in South Africa and has ministered in over seventy-five different countries. He writes about cross-cultural ministry as one with practical experience. Elmer admits early that he is inadequate to be writing a book on servanthood (Pg.14). In fact, he confesses, “...I have procrastinated in every way possible, hoping to avoid this moment. Yet here I am writing and still resisting, certainly feeling inadequate. But I am convinced God has birthed this work—at least I pray so. (Pg.14)”

Cross-Cultural Servanthood is a book about a difficult topic, but necessary for those engaging in Great Commission work. Elmer is accurate in acknowledging his own shortcomings, so he devotes the majority of the book to highlighting the only true servant, Jesus Christ. The purpose and thesis of the book is to examine what it means to be a cross-cultural servant. The key theme is servanthood. Philippians 2 and the example of Christ is the underlying foundation of the book. Jesus is the example and picture of true servanthood. Elmer does a good job throughout the book of raising the standard for what it means to be an effective cross-cultural witness.

Elmer divides the book into three separate parts. Part I (Chapters 1-3) provides the foundational framework of servanthood. Part II (Chapters 4 - 10) examine the various components of servanthood. Part III (Chapters 11-14) highlights the implications of servanthood in everyday life and leadership. Elmer begins in Part I by laying out the challenges and realities of cross-cultural servanthood. He shares that as he interacted with national Christians around the world, the majority of them suggested that missionaries possess an attitude of superiority (Pg.15). This elitist stance by missionaries is a barrier to the gospel and the fulfillment of the Great Commission. Furthermore, the challenge of cross-cultural communication is an often-overlooked reality. Missionaries seeking to be servants in a new culture often struggle to adapt and effectively communicate biblical truth in a culturally acceptable and relevant manner.

Elmer uses two examples in chapters 2-3 that are particularly helpful in thinking through servanthood. First, is the towel and robe analogy from Matthew’s Gospel (Pg.23). Jesus is with his disciples and the mother of James and John asks for one of her sons to be positioned on each side of Jesus and recognized as great. Elmer contrasts this request in light of the example of Christ in taking a towel and washing the feet of his disciples. The question Elmer poses to the reader is will you take the towel like Christ or demand the robe like the disciples? This convicting truth exposes the selfish heart of humanity in comparison to the humble servanthood of Christ. Second, is the monkey and fish analogy in chapter 3. Elmer uses the metaphor of a monkey grabbing a fish out of the water in attempt to help to the fish. The result is the death of the fish (Pg.27). The monkey had good intentions, but his intentions were misguided. This truth is applied to the missionary context where good intentioned missionaries often make crucial mistakes in their new cultural context. The issue is not the intention; the issue is the action and the way in which it is perceived by the host culture . Many missionaries come to the field and subconsciously bring a savior mentality with them from home. They desire to help, but often do so from a position of superiority with little regard for the host culture and taking the necessary time to understand the culture and context.

Elmer utilizes Part II (chapters 4-10) to illustrate the process of servanthood. Servanthood is not the default attitude of humanity and therefore must be developed and cultivated. He breaks this down into six core principles of servanthood: openness, acceptance, trust, learning, understanding, and serving. His argument is that servanthood is a process and includes a breadth of characteristics and traits.

Elmer defines openness as, “the ability to welcome people into your presence and make them feel safe. (Pg.39)” Openness requires one to step out of their comfort zone and initiate relationships with people of other cultures. One of the primary indicators of openness is hospitality. Hospitality demonstrates the willingness to bring others into one’s life. Another aspect of openness is

judgment concerning relationships. Elmer shares research that suggests it takes the average American between 2.4 and 4.6 seconds to decide whether or not to have a relationship with a new acquaintance. One of the barriers to servanthood is pride and fear of those who are different. Openness is the first principle of in the process of servanthood.

Acceptance is the second principle and defined as, "the ability to communicate value, worth and esteem to another person. (Pg.58)" Acceptance means including people regardless of their external features. In this chapter, Elmer references the image of God as a key feature in accepting one another. If every person on earth is created in the image of God, they possess worth and value to the creator. Elmer lists a few factors that limit one's ability to accept others: language, impatience, ethnocentrism, and dogmatism. Perhaps ethnocentrism is one of the biggest barriers to acceptance. Each person believes their home culture is superior to other cultures and this perspective hinders one's ability to be accepting of others. Acceptance is the second principle of servanthood.

Trust is the third principle from Elmer relating to servanthood. He defines trust as, "the ability to build confidence in a relationship so that both parties believe the other will not intentionally hurt them but will act in their best interest (Pg.77)." Trust is something that takes time to develop. Everyone is skeptical of those they meet for the first time, especially in cross-cultural settings. One of the reasons trust is difficult is that it often requires vulnerability and transparency. Yet, trust is essential for any friendship or relationship to function, and takes intentional time, energy, and effort to develop and maintain. Trust is the third principle of servanthood.

Learning is the next principle and the one in which Elmer devotes the most attention. Learning is difficult without a foundation of trust, acceptance, and openness. He defines learning as, "the ability to glean relevant information about, from and with other people (Pg. 93)." Elmer argues that many from the Western world suffer from the virus of the educated person. In other words, most people coming from "educated" cultures believe they are not able to learn from those they perceive to be less educated or spiritual. Furthermore, he argues that as a

result of everyone person being created in the image of God and God's common grace that there are atheists, Hindu's, Muslim's, and others that can contribute to our learning (Pg. 109). He closes by commenting on the various skills attached to learning: listening, responding, and dialogue. Learning is the fourth principle examined by Elmer in the process of servanthood.

Understanding is the fifth principle listed by Elmer. He defines it as, "the ability to see patterns of behavior and values that reveal the integrity of a people (Pg.125)." The ability to understand a new culture and context takes time. The tendency of those thrust into a new culture is to quickly compare the new culture with their home culture. Adapting to a new culture can be a challenging transition. In this chapter, Elmer emphasizes the importance of resisting ethnocentrism. As stress rises, one must remember that the big picture and motivation for entering a new context is disciple making and the glory of God to the ends of the earth. Understanding is the fifth principle included in servanthood.

Lastly, serving is the sixth principle listed by Elmer. He defines serving as, "the ability to relate to people in such a way that their dignity as human beings is affirmed and they are more empowered to live God-glorifying lives (Pg.146)." Elmer argues that one cannot serve without understanding. Serving is the culmination of the other attributes and characteristics. Serving is the central and final piece of servanthood. Inherent to serving is the perspective of esteeming others as more significant than yourself. This is the attitude and mind of Christ that believers are encouraged to cultivate in their own lives.

The principles laid out by Elmer are transferable to all cultural contexts. This is the beauty of deriving truths from the Bible. God's revelation to humanity is timeless and profitable for people of every cultural context. Entering and engaging a new culture with the gospel is difficult. Elmer's book, I believe, accurately portrays that reality, but also provides wisdom and insight as to how one is to approach that task. The primary example he points to throughout the book is the example of Christ. Every believer is to cultivate and develop the attitude and mind of Christ. After all, He (Jesus) is the only true servant.

Witness Well To Anybody, Anywhere, Anytime

Jesus witnessed to rich and poor people, influential and common people, Jews and Gentiles, men and women. He witnessed anyplace: in synagogues and the temple, along beaches, while sitting on hills, while sitting in boats, and even beside a well. His witnessing encounters occurred at night, evening, morning and even mid-day. Jesus witnessed anywhere, to anybody at anytime; and He always witnessed well. In his testimony to the woman at the well (John 4:1-42) Jesus teaches his followers, then and now, important time-

GET CONNECTED: ESTABLISH COMMONALITY

First of all, Jesus established common ground with the woman. "Give Me a drink" (4:7). One might wrongly mistake this brief statement as a mere conversation starter. To the contrary, the bridge was relational - focusing on the common ground between the both of them. The statement identifies the common human situation of thirst, so that Jesus and the woman with very differing backgrounds could meet on common territory.

Jesus' witnessing encounter by the well dispels a common myth - that both participants in the witnessing conversation need to have a lot in common. In fact, the difference between Jesus and this woman were recognized by the woman herself: "How is it that you, being a Jew, ask me for a drink since I am a Samaritan woman (4:9)?" Men and women avoided conversation in public during that time. Also, Jews hated Samaritans and avoided them because they had distorted the Jewish religion. Nevertheless, Jesus emphasized a simple commonality - thirst.

Jesus also dispelled another common myth - that a long relationship must be established in order to gain a hearing for the gospel. Jesus initiated a conversation with a person, and then within minutes (if not seconds) was already into a conversation about spiritual matters.

Find a point of contact with people. This can usually be best done by asking guided, but not overly intrusive, questions about a person. The goal is to make the person feel comfortable and that he/she has something in common with the witness.

GET TO THE POINT: TRANSITION TO SPIRITUAL CONVERSATION

The conversation was centered around a common need and then quickly bridged into a discussion about Jesus, the Living Water. The point of contact, "Give me a drink" also served as the entrance point for the gospel. Using the water analogy, Jesus transitioned to spiritual matters. "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He

would have given you living water." Jesus presented good news about the Messiah to the woman using the analogy of living water. The analogy raised interest toward spiritual matters and left the woman wanting to know more.

Following Jesus' example, bold witnesses often immediately state the bottom line. For example, after building common ground with a person, the witness might say, "I'm certain that I have eternal life, and that I will go to heaven when I die", "Only through blood sacrifice can anyone's sins be forgiven", or "Jesus Christ has proven His faithfulness in my life". After statements such as these, the witness would then share his/her personal testimony or give proof from the Scripture.

GET THEM LOST: DISCUSS PERSONAL SIN AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

After transitioning to spiritual matters, Jesus centered on the woman's ultimate problem - sin. He said to the woman, "Go, call your husband and come here (4:16)." "I have no husband," she replied.

"You have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; this you have said truly (4:17-18)." Jesus revealed the heart of the woman's problem in order to reveal the cure. Jesus would not permit the woman to ignore her sin problem or find the cure without facing the sinful facts which had brought her spiritual thirst. The woman would have to admit and face her sinfulness in order to be cured of its consequences.

The witness should not avoid the topic of sin and its consequences, nor should the witness come across "holier than thou". Instead, the witness can say "we all sin, don't we?" It is always helpful for the witness to admit that he/she is a sinner as well, including himself in the dilemma of being lost before God (Romans 3:23).

Lostness must necessarily precede salvation. The common state of lostness between the witness and the hearer generally allows the witness to share the good news as the way out.

GET THE GOSPEL TO THEM: HIGHLIGHT CHRIST'S SACRIFICE WHICH GUARANTEES FORGIVENESS OF SIN

Jesus quickly drew a distinction between the religious beliefs held by the woman at the well, compared to the true way of salvation that he taught and brought. The conversation was as follows: "Our fathers worshipped in

this mountain, and you people say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship (4:20)." Jesus replied, "Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for such people the Father seeks to be His worshippers. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth (4:21-24)." The point was not where a person worshipped, but the way a person worshipped (spirit and truth) Next the woman expressed her limited, but hopeful knowledge about the coming messiah. He would clear up any confusion, because "He will declare all things to us (25)."

After agreeing on the issue of mutual sinfulness, the objective becomes to find the solution. Where does salvation come from? Every religion presupposes that mankind must do something in order to repair a broken or imperfect relationship between God and man. Therefore each religion offers its own different but very similar way to repair the separation between God and man - man has to do something to repair the relationship.

In witnessing to people of other faiths, the witness must clearly

differentiate between the way the hearer expects to have his/her sins forgiven, compared to the way salvation is revealed in the New Testament.

This is best done by asking a person about his or her religious preference. Then, instead of assuming one knows what that person believes about how he/she hopes to have sin forgiven, ask him/her. After listening to the person, then the witness graciously draws a contrast between what the hearer believes about salvation, and God's true way of salvation through Christ's sacrifice.

After the transition to spiritual matters, agreement about our sinfulness can usually be easily reached by discussing the religious rituals people perform in attempting to erase or pay for their sins. The witness often inquires about the religious activities of the hearer. "What do followers of

this faith do to have their sins forgiven? The person may reply, "I fast, pray, or give alms." Then the witness can ask, "How often do you have to do that to be certain your sins are forgiven?", or "Is your sin debt already paid for?" The response is usually "no," "not yet," or "I don't know." At that point the witness often responds, "So, if I understand correctly, hopefully your sins will be paid for if you are able to do those rituals well enough so that God will forgive you. You must be a better person than me,

because I could never be good enough to be forgiven by a Holy God. But what I believe is different from what you've said. I'm sure my sins are forgiven and I will go to Heaven someday. It's not because I'm a good person or because I do enough good things. I believe that God himself arranged for my sins to be paid for." At that point the gospel is shared.

GET ON WITH IT: INVITE THEM TO RECEIVE CHRIST OR ARRANGE FOLLOW-UP

Had the woman not been open to Jesus' message, we assume that he would have heeded his own advice to his disciples. "Any place that does not receive you or listen to you, as you go out from there, shake the dust off the soles of your feet for a testimony against them. (Mark 6:11)." However, the woman was very open. Therefore Jesus pursued follow-up. Upon showing openness to Christ's message, the woman went into the city and invited several men to "come, see a man who told me all the things that I have done; this is not the Messiah, is it?" (The woman's question, although stated negatively, was hopeful that in fact Jesus was the Messiah.) Jesus stayed there two days with the result that, "Many more believed because of His word."

Often times upon hearing the simple, brief, but powerful gospel, the person will be interested in Christ. If the person has heard the gospel previously perhaps he will

be ready to receive Christ. If open at all, the person will want to know more about how he can know his/her sins are forgiven.

After sharing the gospel, draw the net. Ask the person if they have any questions about what you've shared with them. Next, ask if he/she believes what you've told them. At this point, either draw the net or set a time to meet again. If the person says that they believe what you've told them, then show them Romans 10:9-10. Explain that a person's sins are forgiven when he/she professes that "Jesus is Lord" and believes that Jesus died for his/her sins and arose from the dead.

If confusion arises over confessing that Jesus is Lord, take time to explain Jesus' virgin birth from the Holy Spirit, and his Lordship. However, often times if the person understands the concept of Jesus' sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins, he/she will willingly confess Jesus as Lord also.

For the person who is interested in Jesus, but not yet ready to profess faith, we recommend the following approach. Follow-up can best be done by telling the Old Testament sacrifice stories of Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Noah, Abraham and Moses. This can be done immediately if time allows, but usually is done by setting a time to get together informally in order to study the stories during a series of informal meetings.

Ideally, like the Samaritan woman, the interested person will want to invite his friends to hear the stories as well. This situation is ideal because those who study the stories together can become a house church if they profess faith simultaneously or during the same time frame.

Loving Muslims

Biblical Truth: *Jesus commands His followers to share God's love with all people. The Great Commission does not exclude anyone.*

Background Passage:

Luke 10:25-29 (NIV) – *On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"*

"What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?" He answered, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

"You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live." But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

What seems like a simple commandment has been one of the hardest for Christ's followers to obey.

"Love your neighbor ..."

What seems like a simple commandment has been one of the hardest for Christ's followers to obey. If Jesus had followed the command with "and your neighbors are your family, or your close friends, or even people like you," the commandment would have been an easier one to follow. Instead Jesus told the teacher of the law that his neighbor could be a person of a

different race or class or nationality. His neighbor might come from a people whom the Jews did not like. His neighbor could be a person who is hard to love. Still Jesus' command was and is the same — "Love your neighbor."

There is no room for hatred in His Kingdom.

As Islam grows — and in light of terrorist attacks done under the veil of Islam — Christians in America find themselves dealing with what it means to obey Christ's greatest commandment. Misconceptions and misunderstandings often stand in the way of Christians acting out this love and can hinder the Gospel of Jesus Christ being received by Muslim people.

Muslim Beliefs

A good place to begin any encounter with Muslims is developing an understanding of what they believe. Muslims approach Islam with immense reverence, so showing respect for their religion and having even the most basic knowledge of Islam will go a long way in opening doors to relationships with Muslims. With more than 1.5 billion Muslims in the world and nearly six million in the United States, you are likely to be around Muslims at work, school or in your community. Your attitude toward them could be a determining factor in their openness to the Gospel.

* The central message of Islam is that there is only one god — Allah — and Muhammad is his prophet. Islam teaches that Man is Allah's slave, and it is Man's duty to submit to Allah and obey his will. The rest of Islam's teachings are centered on these beliefs.

* The prophet Muhammad was born in Arabia around 570 A.D. Muslims believe that the angel Gabriel appeared to Muhammad and told him to recite the words that Allah would give him. Over the course of his lifetime, Muhammad is said to have received several messages from Allah. The words he spoke — or rather Allah spoke through him — were collected to form what is now the Islamic holy book, the Qur'an (or Koran).

* Muhammad spread the message of Islam throughout Arabia, challenging the polytheistic Arabian people to worship only one god — Allah. Islam rapidly spread throughout the area of the Middle East and North Africa.

* Muslims believe that Allah is a holy and merciful god who will judge all people on the Day of Judgment to determine whether their good deeds outweigh their bad. Allah will then send them either to eternal paradise or to hell. Therefore, the manner in which they live their lives is very important as it determines their favor with Allah and their eternal destination.

The basic guidelines that help a Muslim live a life that pleases Allah are called the Five Pillars of Islam.

The Five Pillars are:

1. Professing belief in only one god — Allah — and his prophet

Muhammad (Shahada). *There are many prophets in Islam — including Jesus — but Muhammad is the final prophet through whom the Koran was delivered.*

2. Praying five times a day (Salat)

In many Muslim countries when the call to prayer sounds from the minarets, all must stop what they are doing and pray facing the direction of Mecca. Laws often force businesses and shops to close during these times.

3. Fasting during the month of Ramadan (Sawm)

Ramadan is the holiest month of Islam. Practices vary among Muslims as to how they observe it. The traditional observance is to fast during the day and celebrate after sundown. Some Muslims will drink water during the day, however others will spit so they do not even swallow their own saliva.

4. Giving alms or money to the poor (Zakat)

Many teachings of the Koran are admirable, and some such as this are even in line with Christian teachings.

5. Making a pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca (Hajj).

If a Muslim is crippled or too old to make the journey to Mecca, they may send another person to go in their place. Non-Muslims are forbidden from entering the city of Mecca.

The majority of Muslims strive to live a life pleasing to Allah. Their approach to Islam is one of reverence and, at times, fear. They treat the Koran, prayer and all aspects of their religion with the utmost respect and are often appalled by the nonchalance with which Westerners regard God.

Islam teaches that favor with Allah is based on a person's works. Many Muslims even claim they can't know the outcome of their life until Judgment Day — they can only hope they did enough to please Allah and enter paradise.

What about jihad?

Jihad means "struggle", and the belief manifests itself in different ways in Islam. The Greater Jihad is the individual Muslim's personal struggle to submit his life to Allah - i.e. practicing beliefs, fasting, prayer, etc. (Koran — Sura 49:15). Greater Jihad encompasses not only this personal struggle but also the struggle to promote a society that honors Allah and follows Islamic law. The Lesser Jihad refers to the armed struggle to defend Islam — holy war (Koran — Suras 2:190, 9:1-15). While both the Greater and Lesser jihads are found in Islam, the vast majority of Muslims do not practice the Lesser Jihad.

Perspective on growing up Muslim:

Mehmet, a Christian of Muslim background in Turkey shares, "I remember never wanting to upset Allah. As a child, I would go to mosque and was learning to pray in

Arabic. I wanted to please Allah, but I was always afraid I was doing something wrong. One day I was walking home from school and stepped on a piece of paper. I looked down and saw it had Arabic writing on it. I had stepped on a piece of the Koran! Horrified I ran home to tell my father through my tears what I had done. My father looked at the paper and began to laugh. The paper was only Arabic cigarette paper."

*** Muslims believe that while Muhammad was Allah's most important prophet, there were other prophets who taught Muslims how to live.** *They believe that Jesus and many Old Testament figures were also prophets and hold them in high regard. Islam, Judaism and Christianity are said to have all stemmed from Abraham.*

*** The word "Muslim" means "submitted one."** *Muslims believe they must submit themselves to the will of Allah.*

*** There are many different branches of Islam — Sunni Shiite and Sufi are among the major ones.** *While they have varying beliefs, they all hold to Islam's basic creed — Allah is the only god, and Muhammad is his prophet.*

*** Only 20 percent of Muslims across the world are of Arab descent.**

Attitudes Toward Muslims

Sadly, after the events of 9/11, anti-Islamic sentiment has become a socially acceptable form of bigotry. A recent Gallup poll says that almost half of all Americans admit to feeling some prejudice toward Muslims. And although only a small minority of the U.S. population is Muslim, claims of discrimination against Muslims made up a quarter of all discrimination claims filed last year.

Leviticus 19:33-34 (NLT) says, *“Do not take advantage of foreigners who live among you in your land. Treat them like native-born Israelites, and love them as you love yourself. Remember that you were once foreigners living in the land of Egypt. I am the LORD your God.”*

Terrorist attacks are often committed in the name of Islam. In places like London, England and even parts of America, debates arise about the validity of Sharia law (religious laws governing the lives of Muslims) in the judicial system. Minarets dot skylines in American towns and cities as the construction of mosques increases. Women wearing headscarves and burkas are public reminders of the growing presence of Islam.

As Islam grows in America, what should our response as Christians be to Muslims?

Illuminating Our Misconceptions

Imagine you are a young African-American child living in the Deep South in the early 20th century. One

night you are awakened by shouts and see your father being dragged away by men in white robes by the light of a cross burning in your front yard. You know those men are in the Ku Klux Klan, and you have heard the Klan claims to be a Christian group. From that day onward, you are wary of all Christians because you believe they are the ones who terrorized your family.

We know the Ku Klux Klan does not represent Christianity, nor do their teachings in any way fit with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. However, the deplorable actions of a few men can inflict lifelong emotional and spiritual scars on their victims. It is understandable that someone whose only experience with such “Christians” could believe that all Christians behave this way.

In the same way, the vast majority of Muslims would not agree with the actions of terrorists and would find it offensive to be lumped into the same category as groups like Al Qaeda or the Taliban. Just like you and I, they are sick of bloodshed and want nothing more than to work, support their families and live in peace.

Conclusion

The teacher of the law pressed Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” He knew the familiar commands to love God and love your neighbor — those were commandments the Israelites had heard for centuries (Deut. 6:5, Lev. 19:18). However, that day Jesus challenged the teacher’s idea of the kind of person his neighbor could be.

Today we are perhaps challenged even more than ever by Jesus’ concept of “neighbor.” The global community is expanding, and we are discovering that our neighbors may be people who are very different from us. As we encounter Muslims in our daily lives, may Jesus’ words resound in our hearts — Love your neighbor ... – Jesus

Matthew 5:43-48 (NIV) — *“You have heard it said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you, ‘Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even the pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”*

TRAINING SESSION 4

In this session, the goal is to move into some of the logistical details related to your trip while also examining Biblical principles that will help you have a great week of ministry. As it relates to logistics, we highly recommend either incorporating into this session (or creating a fifth session, if necessary) that focuses on ministry preparation related to what you will be doing. Do you need to assign VBS lessons, crafts, devotions, or other assignments? Plan in advance so you are well-prepared.

Included in the fourth session are the following pieces:

- Culture Shock
- Servant Life Mission Principles
- How to Ruin a Short-Term Trip
- Packing List / Airfare Tips
- Scripture Review: Revelation 7:9-10
- Scripture Memorization: Romans 3:23-24
- Reaching Muslims
- Prayer

Conversation Points:

Culture Shock

- In what ways might you experience culture shock? How can you prepare yourself?
- How might God use a different culture to open your eyes to the world around you?

Servant Life Mission Principles

- Which of these five character traits might be challenging to exhibit as you serve?
- In addition to affecting your ministry, how do these traits also affect relationships on your team?

How to Ruin a Short-Term Mission Trip

- How can your attitude shape your entire trip experience?
- It's common to evaluate a trip based on the fruit you see, but is that ultimately in our hands or God's hands? Will you be faithful to serve and leave everything else up to God?

Scripture Review: Revelation 7:9-10

- We see people from every ethnic group gathered before God. What do we learn about God's love for mankind?
- If a day is coming when all people will face the judgment of God, does this give us a sense of urgency to share the gospel?

Conversation Points Continued:

Scripture Memorization: Romans 3:23-24

- Why is the word "all" so important in verse 23? What does this tell us about every person in the world today?
- How are we justified according to these verses? What do we contribute to our salvation?
- In what ways could you use this verse to share Christ?

Reaching Muslims

- How would you explain the doctrine of the Trinity to a Muslim?
- How can you deal with the Bible having different translations and authors in conversation with a Muslim?
- Why is it important that Jesus actually is the Son of God?

Prayer

- Pray for God to unify your team around a common goal and purpose.
- Pray for a spirit of humility and flexibility as you go and serve.

Culture Shock

It may not seem like it, but culture shock is a big deal. Any time you experience another country, culture, people group, and way of living, it takes some adjusting. Not everyone experiences culture shock, but it's still important to recognize it and know how to deal with it.

Culture shock is characterized by an anxious feeling from being surrounded by completely new things. You are so accustomed to life in your specific context that it may overwhelm you to suddenly find yourself in a culture that you know nothing about. This feeling can be accentuated when you are experiencing overwhelming poverty and challenging living conditions as part of your culture shock. If you have never been exposed to this type of living, it can be challenging to process and will likely reshape the way you see the world around you. Obviously, this can be a lot to process in a very short amount of time.

The best thing you can do when it comes to culture shock is to keep an open mind about your new experiences. Remember that people around the world think and act differently than you. Keep an understanding mind about others' opinions. The worst thing you can do is to think that you are superior to someone of a different culture or people group.

Along with keeping an open mind, it's important to be flexible as well. You will be experiencing a new culture and things may not always go as you expected. In fact, you probably already know that things will rarely go how you anticipated on a mission trip. Remember to be easy-going when new plans arise. This also includes maintaining a positive attitude instead of complaining.

If you're feeling some culture shock, communicate with the people on your team. It is very likely that someone else may be feeling the same way, or can at least help talk you through what you are experiencing. Being able to identify with others about your thoughts can help you not be paralyzed by culture shock.

Keep in mind that if you experience culture shock, that does not mean you are a failure or something is wrong with you. In fact, it could mean that you are actually processing things at a deeper level than others. Everyone adjusts differently to a new setting. You may not even identify with culture shock. However, if you do, it's important to be aware of what to do so that it does not become a problem and prohibit you from serving in this new culture.

Servant Life Mission Principles

Servant Life seeks to equip and encourage trip participants as you prepare for your experience.

Outlined below you will find a list of character traits along with Scripture references. As you begin to process the attitude and posture of your heart and prepare for the trip, pray the Lord will supply you with these Christ-like traits.

1. Humility

- Go with a humble heart attuned to the Lord's plans for the trip, not your own agenda. You are not going to "fix" anything, but rather to selflessly serve alongside the long-term missionary partners. Fervently pray against pride creeping into your heart.
 - *Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. {Philippians 2:3-4}*
 - *When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with the humble is wisdom. {Proverbs 11:2}*

2. Flexibility

- A mission experience exposes you to different cultures, which often times means the schedule isn't always predictable. Having a "go with the flow" attitude is crucial, as plans may change from day to day. Flexibility allows you to continually find joy in each circumstance.
 - *I desire to do your will, my God; your law is within my heart. {Psalm 40:8}*
 - *Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. {1 Thessalonians 5:16-18}*

3. Patience

- Patience is key as you encounter new people, places and cultures. Things may not always go as planned, and communication with locals may not always be as easy. Pray for the Lord to equip you with an attitude that is slow to speak and quick to listen.
 - *Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger. {James 1:19}*
 - *May God who gives patience, steadiness, and encouragement help you to live in complete harmony with each other – each with the attitude of Christ toward the other. {Romans 15:5}*

4. Perseverance

- You may experience unfamiliar or difficult situations while serving; therefore perseverance is important. The Lord will supply you with the strength to make it through each and every circumstance.
 - *Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. {Galatians 6:9}*
 - *Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him. {James 1:12}*

5. Love

- Love is central to each and every character trait that a Christ-follower embodies through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Love always, often, deeply, sacrificially, selflessly, and unconditionally.
 - *Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. {1 Corinthians 13:4-5}*
 - *And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. {Colossians 3:14}*

How To Ruin Your Short Term Mission Trip

Here are four common ways to ruin your short-term mission trip. Be mindful of these and make sure you don't set yourself or your team up for failure.

1. *Have an "It's all about me" attitude.* The best way to ruin your mission trip is to act as if everything revolves around your comfort and your wants and needs. Even if you are sacrificing time and resources to go and serve, don't expect others to worship the ground you walk on. Read Philippians 2:3-8 and consider the humble attitude of Christ.

2. *By all means, don't be flexible.* If you don't live out the words of Philippians 2:14 to "do all things without grumbling or questioning," then you are guaranteed to have a trip full of complaints. There is not a formula to mission trips; you should expect a high degree of flexibility when you are serving real people and meeting real needs. Please be a blessing to work with and a joy to be around, not the person complaining that your expectations aren't being met.

3. *Don't devote yourself to prayer or time in the Word.* Spending time talking to the Lord and studying His word only ensures that your heart will be aligned with His will. Failure to draw near to the Lord will set you up to have the wrong attitude, and possibly the wrong actions. Furthermore, in order to tell others about the spiritual disciplines of prayer and Bible study, we ourselves must practice those disciplines.

4. *Start thinking your mission trip is terrible because you didn't see much fruit.* It is likely that you might not see hundreds of people come to know Christ while you are there, but that does not mean your trip was a bust. 1 Corinthians 3:6 reminds us that there are stages of planting seeds, watering, and seeing growth. As a short term team, you are largely helping to plant and water seeds-- and ultimately God gets the glory in their growth!

We want you to have the best mission trip possible. So please do the opposite of these 4 things. Always keep the Lord and the gospel in the forefront of your mind! Don't be the reason that you or teammates have a bad experience.

Scripture Review

Revelation 7:9-10

"After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

Scripture Memorization

Romans 3:23-24

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus

Reaching Muslims

Biblical Truth: *How can Muslims believe in the One of whom they have not heard?*

Background Passages:

Romans 10:12-15 (NIV)

“For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile — the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for ‘Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’ How then can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who bring the good news!’”

1 Peter 3:15 (NIV)

“But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.”

The First Step

“Muslims must feel that we really care for them as persons, that we love them and have a genuine concern for them (not merely for their souls). In nearly every case of the conversion of a Muslim, that man or woman was first influenced by Christian love.”

—Charles R. Marsh, *Encountering the World of Islam* p. 305.

The call to love Muslims is clear. Jesus commands His followers to share His Good News with all people. The challenge is to know how best to communicate God’s love and message. We must first understand what separates Muslim individuals from Jesus Christ. Some Muslims

may struggle with particular beliefs and others may confuse Western culture and morals with Christianity, while some may not have ever heard the Gospel message. Whatever the case may

be, sharing the message of Jesus Christ with a Muslim requires love, relationships and prayer.

What’s the Difference?

There is a surprising amount of theological common ground between a follower of Christ and a Muslim. However, there are some major differences between the two religions. These differences may initially appear straightforward, but a deeper understanding of them provides insight into the Muslim mindset on the Christian faith.

The Nature of God’s Love

Followers of Islam and Christianity both claim to worship a loving God, but the nature of that love and the manner in which it is revealed is vastly different in the two religions. For Christians the ultimate revelation of God’s love is seen in Jesus Christ — His life, death and resurrection. For

Muslims that revelation is not a person but their holy book, the Koran. The Koran provides Muslims with Allah’s perfect law. Islam teaches that Allah graciously spoke the words of the Koran through the prophet Muhammad and thus provided mankind with a means to please Allah — following his perfect law.

This is significant because, in the Christian faith, man’s sinfulness is so great and God is so holy that only by the saving work of Jesus Christ can we find salvation. In Islam sin exists, but it does not demand the need for a Savior. Instead man can gain salvation through good works and following the law presented in the Koran. Muslims accept they have sin in their lives; however, they do not realize the weight of that sin.

Jesus and Muhammad

Jesus is the central figure of our faith. He is God incarnate who came to live a perfect life on earth as a man, suffered a physical death on the cross and was raised from the dead. By His death and resurrection, Christians are able to enter into relationship with a holy God.

Muhammad does not serve the same role in Islam as Jesus does in Christianity. Muhammad is not the savior of Muslims. He is Allah’s final prophet and through him Allah gave his final and supreme revelation — the Koran.

Deity of Christ

Muhammad was not the only prophet in Islam. Other prophets include biblical figures such as Abraham, Moses, David and Jesus Christ. Jesus is held in high regard in the Muslim faith. Muslims even accept the virgin birth (Koran — Suras 3:47; 19:20-22; 21:19; 66:12), His miracles (Sura 2:253), His sinless nature (Sura 19:19) and His ascension into heaven (Sura 3:55). However, they do not believe that He is God.

The deity of Christ is a major stumbling block to Muslims. A common misconception among Muslims is that Christians believe Jesus Christ's being the Son of God means God came down and had physical relations with Mary. For Muslims, this is an affront to the holiness of God.

A simple explanation of what Christians actually believe about Jesus can help clear up misunderstandings Muslims may have. When shared in a respectful way in the context of a relationship, these truths can help to move a Muslim one step closer to faith in Christ.

Trinity

A central teaching of Islam is the belief in only one god. When Muhammad first spread the message of Islam across Arabia he encountered people who worshipped many gods.

Many Muslims assume that the Christian doctrine of the Trinity

means that Christians are polytheists – believing in three gods. It is important whenever speaking with a Muslim to stress the unity of God. He is one God revealing Himself in three different persons. The Trinity is a difficult doctrine even for Christian theologians to understand, but the key is to help Muslims comprehend that the God of Christianity is one God.

A useful tool in helping Muslims better understand the Trinity is to present them with their own belief about the nature of the Koran. Muslims believe the Koran was uncreated and has existed in the mind of Allah for all eternity. The concept that both Allah and the Koran are two separate, eternal and uncreated things is just as difficult to understand as God presenting Himself in three distinct persons. Remember that a conversation such as this must be based in love and most likely in the context of an already strong friendship.

The Bible in Islam

Muslims believe that the Koran is Allah's supreme and final revelation. They will often argue that the Bible has been corrupted or changed and will not read it because they think it has been altered from the original text, making it invalid.

In order to reveal the truth of the Bible to Muslims, a useful (though seemingly unlikely) starting point is the Koran itself. Muhammad believed that the Torah and the New Testament were trustworthy sources

of spiritual truth. The Koran makes this clear in Sura 5:68. A Muslim friend may argue that while the Bible may have once been trustworthy, it is now corrupted. Asking when exactly the Bible was corrupted forces them to think about the nature of Muhammad and the Koran. If the Bible were corrupted before the Koran was written around the seventh century A.D., then Muhammad and the Koran are wrong. Conversely, there are many existing texts of the Bible that were around before Muhammad ever lived.

While the Koran can be used to point Muslims toward the Gospel, it is not a substitute for the Bible. Encouraging Muslim friends to read and engage the Scriptures themselves will open the door for the Holy Spirit to speak to them through God's word.

For the Gospel in Arabic, visit: injl.net

Reaching Muslims

Love is essential to any effective ministry. When working with Muslims, it is very important to build relationships on this foundation. Showing Muslims they are loved — not merely “courted” in order to be converted, but truly loved — will allow for deep, Gospel-driven conversations to occur. It may involve stepping out of our comfort zones, but as followers of Jesus Christ we are commanded to share His love with the world. And it can be a great way to make a lifelong friend!

Getting to know people from other cultural and faith backgrounds helps us understand not just how we are different but also how we are the same – sharing the challenges, fears and joys that are common in life. By engaging with Muslims in genuine love and respect, we acknowledge to them and to ourselves that God does not play favorites. His grace is truly amazing, intended for us all.

Working Through Their Misconceptions

While the life of a true Christian is not an obstacle to Muslims seeking Jesus, the manner in which “Christian” culture is often perceived is a major deterrent. These misconceptions must be worked through before a Muslim will be open to the idea of faith in Christ.

American and Western culture are sadly mistaken for Christianity throughout most of the Muslim world. Some Muslims assume all Americans are Christians and, therefore, that everything American culture produces reflects Christian principles. We know that our faith teaches humility, modesty and integrity, but our culture does little to support these values. Many Muslims have never met a true follower of Christ and what they know about “Christianity” comes more from American movies and television than from Christians themselves.

“Many Muslims [around the world] lump Christianity and Western culture together. Many of them have satellites and can watch American

movies, listen to American music and are often exposed to pornography. So it is no surprise they often think Christians are sex maniacs.”

-Tim, a missionary in a Muslim country

Common Misconceptions

All Americans are Christians.

This is a dangerous notion not only because American culture is obviously a poor representative of Jesus Christ but also because it can lead to Muslims thinking they cannot become Christians because they are not Americans.

Christians have loose morals and live a very immodest lifestyle.

The way many Christians in America often dress — especially women — can be very offensive to Muslims. It is essential for the sensuality of American culture to be separated from those who follow Christ.

Christians are polytheists who believe in three gods.

The doctrine of the Trinity is a very confusing one and must be patiently worked through with Muslims.

Christians are not reverent toward their faith or the Bible.

Muslims approach Islam with a deep sense of reverence, especially in regard to the Koran. They would never set it on the floor or place other books on top of it. They are appalled at the nonchalance with which some Christians treat the Bible, as if it were just another book.

Because Christians are not seen praying five times a day (like Muslims do), they must not pray at all.

Prayer is an important part of the Christian faith not only as a means of spiritual formation and communing with God but also as a witness to others.

The best way to overcome these misconceptions is by showing Muslims the life of a true follower of Christ within the context of a loving friendship. Many have never met a Christian and will be surprised at the lifestyle of a person who is seeking fervently after God.

Cultural Insights

*** Hospitality is an important part of Muslim culture. Make hospitality a priority with Muslim friends by inviting them into your home.**

*** For Muslims, the cleanliness of a home reflects the condition of their heart. A clean kitchen goes a long way with a Muslim guest.**

*** Indoor pets are not common in most Muslim countries, so it is best to leave them outside when a Muslim guest is visiting.**

*** Pork is forbidden in Islam. Out of respect, do not serve or eat bacon or any other pork products around your Muslim friends.**

*** Serve tea or coffee before and after the meal, and make a point to not rush conversation. The conversation should be the central focus of their visit, not the meal.**

Change is Spiritual

The Muslim call to prayer resounds from minarets five times a day in Muslim cities such as Istanbul, Turkey and Cairo, Egypt as an audible reminder of the need for Muslims to pray to Allah. For Christians, the call to pray should resound even more clearly. Prayer is first and foremost the key to reaching Muslims. Asking God to intervene in their hearts is vital to any sort of change.

A Muslim can be confronted with the most profound arguments for Christianity and have the best of friendships with Christians and still not open his or her heart to Christ. Change is spiritual and can take time. Remember that only God can do this work. The Christian's responsibility is simply to be obedient in fostering a loving environment in which a change of heart is more likely to occur.

It can often take several Gospel presentations over the course of many years for a Muslim to come to faith in Jesus Christ, but sometimes acceptance happens much more quickly. There are numerous accounts of Muslims encountering Christ in their dreams or learning of Him through personal study. God uses events such as these to prepare the hearts of Muslims to receive the Gospel when it is shared with them. A Christian working among Muslims must rely solely on the work of the Holy Spirit. Any change of heart cannot be forced – it involves much patience, a consistent witness and prayer.

Conclusion

Paul's teaching to the Corinthians is a poignant reminder of the importance of love. Knowledge of Christian and Islamic doctrines, a clear Gospel presentation and stellar arguments are no better than clanging cymbals if they are done without love. Christ taught that loving God and loving our neighbors are the greatest commandments — all others hang on those two. When it comes to sharing with Muslim friends, relationships filled with God's love are the foundations upon which all other work is built.

Five Pillars of Islam

Shahada – Professing the belief in only one god – Allah – and his prophet Muhammad
Salat – Praying five times a day
Sawm – Fasting during the month of Ramadan
Zakat – Giving alms or money to the poor

Hajj – Making a pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca **Allah**

Allah is the sole god of Islam. Allah is the Arabic word for "god".

Muslims

Followers of Islam are called Muslims. The word Muslim literally means "submitted one."

Muhammad

Muhammad is the founder of Islam. Muhammad is believed to be Allah's final and most important prophet.

Muhammad was born in what is today Saudi Arabia in 570 A.D.

The Koran

The Koran is Islam's holy book. Allah spoke the words of the Koran through the prophet Muhammad. The words of the Koran are seen to be uncreated in the mind of Allah for eternity past.

Jihad

Jihad means "struggle" and refers to the difficulty of living a life that pleases Allah according to the teachings of the Koran. Holy war is the lesser side of this struggle. The greater war is against the evil in one's own heart.

Mecca

Mecca is the holiest site in Islam. Muhammad was born in Mecca, and it was here that he received the revelation that became the Koran. Muslims must travel to Mecca once in their lifetimes (hajj). Muslims face towards Mecca when they pray. Today Mecca is a city in Saudi Arabia.

Prophets

Muslims believe that while Muhammad was Allah's most important prophet, there were other prophets who taught Muslims how to live. They believe that Jesus and many Old Testament figures were also prophets and are held in high regard. Islam, Judaism and Christianity are said to have all stemmed from Abraham.

Branches

There are many different branches of Islam — *Sunni, Shiite and Sufi* are among the major ones. While they have varying beliefs, they all hold to Islam's basic creed — Allah is the only god, and Muhammad is his prophet.

Discussion Notes

"Allah" is the Arabic word for "god". Is Islam's Allah the same god as the God of the Bible? What are some differences in the ways Muslims view salvation compared to the Christian's view? Are Muslims more respectful of Islam than Christians are of Christianity?

Allowing for discussion, consider:

- The God of the Bible and the god of Islam are not the same. It is true that Muslims accept much of the Old Testament and claim to worship the same God. However, as Christians we must remember that Jesus Christ is the ultimate revelation of God, so while there is much Muslims and Christians can agree on, without the biblical understanding of Christ any similarities between Allah and God ultimately fail.

- Muslims view salvation coming through a life that is based on the law given to them through the Koran. There is no assurance of salvation until Allah's day of judgment. For Christians, salvation is assured only through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

- Generate open discussion about the degree of reverence between Christians and Muslims. While deep respect for God should be integral to Christianity, Christians have a relational aspect with God which Muslims lack.

In what ways have Christians been poorly portrayed throughout history? Compare those to the way Muslims are often portrayed in news reports today.

Allowing for discussion, consider:

- Some obvious examples include The Crusades, the Inquisition, the selling of Indulgences, persecution or forced conversions by Christian authorities throughout the Middle Ages, terrorist acts by the Irish Republican Army, the Salem Witch Trials, the bombing of abortion clinics in the U.S., anti-gay violence and other hate crimes, etc.

- It is clear that the above examples of terrorism committed in the name of Christianity bear no resemblance to the Biblical person or teachings of Jesus Christ and do **not** reflect the beliefs of most Christians. Similarly, it is important to guard against assuming that modern terrorist acts committed in the name of Islam represent all Muslims.

How would you explain the doctrine of the Trinity to a Muslim? How can you deal with the Bible having different translations and authors in conversation with a

Muslim? Why is it important that Jesus actually was the Son of God?

Allowing for discussion, consider:

- The doctrine of the Trinity is a complex one. When conversing with a Muslim it is important to clearly state the Trinity is **not** three separate gods, neither is it simply God revealing Himself in different ways at different times. The Trinity is one God in three distinct persons.

- The Bible is the inspired Word of God. God is the author, but He commissioned humans to write it. The Bible has different translations but was originally written in Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic. Jesus Christ is the focus of God's divine revelation we know as the Scriptures.

- Jesus Christ as the Son of God is essential to the Christian faith and is the belief upon which all others are based. Jesus Christ was both fully man and fully God.

Airline Restrictions/Tips

Arrive early for check-in at the airport. Because you are flying and traveling as a group, we strongly suggest arriving at least two to two and a half hours before your flight is scheduled to depart. This allows time for parking, shuttle transportation, check-in, and security checks. If anything is amiss, you will be thankful for time to sort it out. All it takes is for one group member to get slowed down at security or check-in to delay your whole group.

Label all of your luggage. Servant Life provides each trip participant with two luggage tags that we strongly recommend your group using. This will help when collecting luggage from baggage claim. Due to the similar look of most luggage, you may also want to set your bag apart in another way by adding a ribbon, luggage strap, or sticker in a visible location.

Always have your passport with you. While traveling through airports, it is important to always have your passport with you. Do not pack it in your checked luggage, and do not put it in the pocket of your airplane seat. It is best to keep it in a secure section of your carry on luggage.

Checked Baggage

We recommend that everyone travel with one checked bag (often times, you can get by with no checked bags; one should be the maximum). Remember that every traveler gets a carry-on bag (small bag) and a personal item (like a backpack!), and you can often pack a week's worth of clothing and essentials between these two. Regardless, it is recommended that everyone be able to manage their own luggage while traveling. Remember that luggage with wheels will make life much easier as you maneuver through airports! Also, be sure to put a copy of your passport information page in every piece of your luggage.

Carry-On Bags

It is always a good idea to keep a change of clothes as well as a small toiletries kit (toothbrush, deodorant, etc.) with you in your carry-on in the event of flight delays or cancellations. Your passport counts as your form of identification and you must keep this on you at all times in the airports. You may not carry-on liquids of any kind larger than 3 oz. Any liquids 3 oz. or smaller must be in their original container and in a quart-sized Ziploc bag.

****Baggage policies are based on airline regulations and change often. Please visit your airline's website before you leave for their latest baggage policies. Any costs associated with checking bags or overweight bags are solely the responsibility of the participant.****

General Packing List

This is simply a *general* packing list— it is not necessarily specific for your trip. Always double-check with your group leader / mission partner to make sure you aren't missing anything specific. Some things on this list you may not need (e.g., linens may already be provided for you).

Clothing

- Lightweight clothing for hot weather, such as athletic shorts and t-shirts
- Pants and shorts that you do not mind getting dirty
- Tennis Shoes and/or sturdy sandals, chacos
- Shorts - (**knee-length shorts**, capris, jeans are fine; *Soffees, cut-offs, spandex, or jogging shorts may not be fine*)
- T-shirts – **No tank tops/spaghetti straps**, no inappropriate slogans, midriff fully covered
- Nicer clothes for worship
- Sweater, sweatshirt, or light jacket for chilly evenings
- Flip flops for use in the showers
- Bathing suit - should be a one piece for girls
- Hat
- Raincoat/Poncho
- Girls: it's a good idea to bring a couple of long skirts
- Guys: bring some khaki shorts in addition to gym shorts

Toiletries

- Basic Personal toiletries – toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, shampoo, feminine items, etc.
- Insect repellent
- Sunscreen
- Disinfectant hand gel
- Dramamine/Gas X/Antacids/Imodium/Tylenol (as needed)
- Baby Wipes/Kleenex
- Chapstick with Sunscreen
- Aloe vera – for sunburn relief

Other

- Passport (place in your carry-on bag and have a copy in your checked bag)
- Linens?
- Bible, Journal and Pens
- Camera
- Flashlight
- Sunglasses
- Snacks
- Water bottle (that can be refilled)
- Spending money for day off
- Toys/games to play with the children

*Please do not plan on being able to access / use laundry facilities.

Final Thoughts

Our team at Servant Life is thankful for the opportunity to send you to serve among the nations. We believe that God is worthy of all honor and glory, and it is with joy that we seek to proclaim the hope of Christ to the ends of the earth. We hope these sessions have challenged you and prepared you, and we will be praying for you as you serve.

As a reminder for group leaders— we have also included content for a “Debrief Session” that your team can complete at the end of your trip. You can find this on the Trip Resources page of the Servant Life Prep Center (www.servantlife.com/prepcenter).

Lastly, we would like to once again thank the Church at Brook Hills for sharing some of this content with us. We are so thankful for this church and the way they faithfully seek to make much of Christ among the nations.