



HEARTLAND
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



HEARTLAND
INTERNATIONAL MISSION

Delegation Packet

Friday, May 15 2009

Revision 1.1

Welcome Mission Delegate to El Salvador

Thank you for following your call to join, engage and serve in international mission to El Salvador. The following has been put together to help you become aware of and to understand some basic guidelines that we as representatives of our group try to adhere to while serving on these missions. Please remember that while on this mission, you are participating as a member of a larger body/group and that your actions as an individual can and will effect the entire body/group. These guidelines have been set in place to help provide a safe, comfortable travel environment for all who participate in this mission. Please remember this delegation is traveling within a third world country and the safety of the group is and should be everyone's first priority. We must also respect the people we are serving. Please keep in mind our cultural differences. Remember that we are on a mission to walk with and serve the people of El Salvador.

We encourage you as a delegations to always leave your assumptions behind and enter El Salvador with openness and humility, so that you can truly "walk with the people" instead of simply trying to come in and fix things. Listen, love and grow.

GOD,

As we move to answer Your call Lord to serve our world,

Open our ears to hear what we might not want to hear,

Open our ears to hear Your truth.

Open our eyes so we can see the reality of our world,

Open our eyes to see Your truth.

Open our hearts to feel the pain that humanity endures,

Open our hearts to feel the truth which will heal.

Lord, guide our souls and use our bodies to do Your will as we go forward to answer Your call.

Amen

DELEGATION INFORMATION PACKET

WHAT TO PACK

Identification:

- Passport & photocopy of the first page of passport (pack separately & leave a copy at home).
- Other photo I.D. (driver's license)
- Carry a card with important medical information (blood type, allergies to medications, etc)

Clothing:

It will be hot and humid (80-90 degrees) during the day, but the evenings can be cool in the mountains of Berlin. Clothes should be clean but not fancy. Tee shirts are common. Shorts are becoming a little more common, but be very conservative (for either gender). PACK LIGHT! Try to squeeze all you need in one carry-on. You can always launder your items. The Pastoral Team is willing to do our laundry. At the end of the week, a tip would be very appropriate if you take advantage of their kindness! Better yet, have the team teach you how to launder. You will be humbled! Keep in mind it is fun because we only have to do this for a week!

- Carry-on luggage: include a change of clothes, toiletries, prescription medicines in original containers
- Light-weight skirts, pants, dresses, shorts, etc.
- Conservative clothing: keep skirt and short hems at knee level, no spaghetti straps or strapless tops please
- No backless walking shoes. DON'T break in a new pair of shoes on this trip
- flip-flops (for showers or around the Pastoral House)
- sunglasses, hat/cap, bandana (for dusty truck rides)
- plastic bag for dirty clothes
- bathing suit if a trip to the beach is on the agenda (be very conservative...women, you may want a tank top and shorts as very few Salvadorans have a real suit and go in the ocean in their clothing)
- long-sleeved shirt or light jacket for the evenings
- If you plan to sleep in a hammock outside: WARM sleeping clothes, wool socks (it gets very cool in the mountains at night!)
- For rainy season only (June-November): rain gear if desired

Equipment and toiletries:

- Aspirin/Tylenol or preferred headache reliever
- Pepto Bismol tablets or Imodium
- sun screen and lip balm
- mosquito repellent and a cortisone cream for bites
- empty water bottle
- small flashlight
- munchies (non-melting) and not to share with the children
- camera and batteries if needed
- notebook and journal, pens and pencils
- earplugs if you are bothered by roosters crowing at 4 in the morning!
- leisure (?) reading material
- comfy backpack or fanny pack
- Spanish dictionary (but don't rely on it too much...it can be awkward)

Safety tips:

- Obtain recommended vaccinations and prescriptions prior to departure
- Avoid ingesting ANY local water. Use bottled water provided by the Pastoral Team
- Brush your teeth with pure water
- Be careful not to get water in your mouth when you shower
- Don't bite your nails or rub your eyes after washing in pila water
- Drink lots of pure water or Gator-aid to avoid dehydration
- Avoid local foods unless prepared or approved by the Pastoral Team
- Avoid ice unless you are SURE it is made from pure water
- Have your Imodium ready at the first sign of tummy rumbling!
- Avoid flashy jewelry and watches
- Carry minimal valuables and just be aware of your surroundings and belongings
- Carry minimal money and only a copy of your passport in a money belt. Leave your original passport at the Pastoral House.
- Keep prescription medicines in original bottles with your name on it
- Don't over pack. You can purchase basic items in Berlin and/or launder

- When you go out, travel in pairs. Tell someone from the Pastoral Team and several members of your delegation where you are going and when you expect to be back so they won't worry.
- The use of illegal drugs will not be tolerated.
- Alcohol/tobacco use is prohibited for those under the legal age of their country of origin.
- Avoid all contact with local animals, domestic and agricultural.

Tips to make your stay more enjoyable:

- Learn some very basic Spanish (please, thank you, where's the bathroom, etc)
- Even if you don't speak Spanish...TRY! Pantomime/gesture/laugh and learn as you go. You will find people are VERY patient and understanding and won't belittle you for not knowing! They will love you for trying.
- Trust the Pastoral Team. Try any food they give you. You might be pleasantly surprised!
- Try to avoid wasting food – if you don't like beans... ask for a plate with “no frijoles, por favor” ... or give them to a table mate who likes them!
- Offer to help in the kitchen with dishes or with the laundry. Ask them to “teach” you because they sometimes feel awkward accepting your assistance! Try making a pupusa! It's a hoot!
- Play with the children. They give unconditional love!
- Listen with your ears and your heart at every opportunity. You will learn and understand so much more.

When you are there...do as the locals do!

- Be thoughtful of the hard work of the Pastoral Team. They clean, cook, and pick up after you. Try to be maintenance free! Be respectful of their hard work.
- Put toilet paper in the waste can next to the toilet. Do NOT put it in the toilet as the sewers tend to plug up! (Don't worry, you'll get used to this habit).
- There are 3 bathrooms available. Be aware of other people's needs.
- People like to have their photos taken but it is polite to ask first. Just say “por favor” and point to your camera and then to them and smile a lot.
- If someone on the street starts to talk to you and you do not understand... just say “no hablo español” and they will understand that you do not understand but they will talk to you anyway! Pantomime and smile!

Be respectful of the local culture:

- Travel in spirit of humility and with a genuine desire to meet and talk with local people
- Be aware of the feelings of the local people; prevent what might be offensive behavior. Photography, particularly, must respect persons.
- Cultivate the habit of listening and observing rather than merely hearing and seeing or knowing all the answers
- Realize that other people may have concepts of time and have thought patterns that are different from yours – not inferior.
- Remember that you are only one among many visitors; do not expect special privileges.
- When shopping through bargaining, remember that the poorest merchant will give up a profit rather than give up his or her personal dignity.
- Do not make promises to local people or to new friends that you cannot keep. Do not hand out money or trinkets.
- Spend time each day reflecting on your experiences in order to deepen your understanding.

CODE OF ETHICS

- Travel in a spirit of humility and with a genuine desire to meet and talk with local people.
- Be aware of the feelings of the local people; prevent what might be offensive behavior. Photography, particularly, must respect persons.
- Cultivate the habit of listening and observing rather than merely hearing and seeing or knowing all the answers.
- Realize that other people may have concepts of time and have thought patterns that are different from yours—not inferior, only different.
- Instead of only seeing the exotic, discover the richness of another culture and way of life.
- Get acquainted with local customs; respect them.
- Remember that you are only one among many visitors; do not expect special privileges.
- When shopping through bargaining, remember that the poorest merchant will give up a profit rather than give up his or her personal dignity.
- Do not make promises to local people or to new friends that you cannot keep.
- Spend time each day reflecting on your experiences in order to deepen your understanding. What enriches you may be robbing others.
- You want a home away from home? Why travel?

BASIC SPANISH PHRASES

No hablo español	I don't speak Spanish
Buenas Dias	Good Day, hello (before noon)
Buenas Tardes	Good afternoon
Buenas Noches	Good evening
Como Está?	How are you
Muy bien, gracias	I'm fine, thank you
Gracias	Thank you
De nada	You're welcome (literally: it's nothing)
Lo siento	I'm sorry
Donde es?	Where is?
El baño	The bathroom
La cocina	The kitchen
El mercado	The market
Como se dice en español?	How do you say in Spanish?
Ayudame, por favor.	Help me please.
Despacio, por favor.	Slowly, please
Mucho gusto	Pleased to meet you
Me gusto mucho	I like a lot
La comida es delicioso	The food is delicious
Puedo ayudar?	Can I help?
Necesito una toalla por favor	I need a towel please
Necesito una manta por favor	I need a blanket please
Enséñeme por favor	Teach me please

SUGGESTED READING BEFORE YOU TRAVEL

Non-Fiction:

The Massacre at El Mozote – Mark Danner

Memoirs in Mosaic –

Salvador – Joan Didion

Violence of Love – (Romero homilies)

Through the Year with Oscar Romero – translated by Irene Hodgson

Search the internet for historical background about El Salvador and the Civil War

Fiction:

Bitter Grounds – Sandra Benítez

The Weight of All Things – Sandra Benítez

From Grandmother to Granddaughter – Michael Gorkin

Watch:

Romero (the DVD)

COMPANEROS CONTACTS FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Companeros Mediator:

Joe Piertle

515-250-5857

jpirtle13@hotmail.com

Delegation Scheduling & Support:

Nancy Lister-Settle (Jack)

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Companeros Email: companeros@oursisterparish.org

TAX DEDUCTION

It is recommended to keep all receipts from your trip and records from your church for any fees related to your mission trip. Contact your accountant for further information to see if they are tax deductible.

TEN SECOND RESPONSES TO “HOW WAS YOUR TRIP?”

1. It made me realize that friendships and solidarity with those in life-threatening circumstances can make us both feel a commonality of our faith and our lives as humans.
2. For me it marked the beginning of a long-term relationship with the people of the Berlín parish.
3. It is humbling to see such hope and love in the midst of desperate situations.
4. Conditions are bleak but our partnership helps keep hope alive!
5. While there I learned about a *finca* (coffee plantation). This particular *finca* is special because the owners pay their workers three times as much as the average *finca* owner—the average being as little as \$2 a day. This *finca* also has better living conditions.....
6. (DC church) We met the people of the mountain village of Virginia where they had started building a small church when the earthquake hit last year and damaged the corners of the structure. The engineer says the building can be completed with the corners reinforced. I think it would be the perfect continuation of our building project if we could provide the resources for the people of Virginia to finish work on their church.
7. The trip was a wonderful experience and quite an eye-opener!! Over 20% of the population have no income and do not know where tomorrow’s meal will come from.
8. Did I enjoy my trip? The suffering from corruption, poverty and violence broke my heart. But the faith, love and hope of the Salvadoran people filled my broken heart.
9. How was my trip? It was the most beautiful landscape I have ever visited. And it is the most wounded place I have ever been.
10. How was my trip? That’s a hard question. I feel like I’ve been to the ends of the earth, and seen the deepest level of poverty. And God was there.
11. Did I enjoy my trip? I loved the beauty of the place and the people. But it is hard to enjoy the poverty and suffering I saw. We can’t enjoy the one, and ignore the other.
12. My trip was one of sharp contrast. The people are open, warm and loving; the countryside is breathtakingly beautiful; but all this is in a setting of extreme poverty.
13. During my time in El Salvador I met some of the most loving people I have ever known in my life. I also learned that the nation and its people are deeply scarred by a horrendous war where thousands were killed and massacred for seeking economic and social justice.
14. While in El Salvador I fell in love with the gracious, warm people who live there. I was deeply saddened to learn that the horrific war that ended in the early 90s is not truly over as the people continue to suffer extreme social and economic injustice.
15. Although I truly and deeply enjoyed the wonderful people and the extremely beautiful countryside, I was saddened to learn that 25% of the population is in extreme poverty and another 30% is on the edge of poverty. These are huge numbers in a country with a population of 7 million.