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PilgriMission

Transforming by Being Transformed

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PilgriMission: *Transforming by Being Transformed*

What Is *PilgriMission*?

Congratulations! You've decided to participate in a short-term mission trip. You've chosen to set aside some of your valuable time to travel and to work alongside people you don't know, most likely in a culture (and maybe even a language) you don't understand. Why on earth would you do that?

Perhaps it was a sense of curiosity and adventure. You want to see the world, hear the sounds, and experience places far from home. Or maybe you saw a poster at your church or a video online that made your heart hurt for those you hope to help. Or was it during your devotional time with God that you discerned a call to leave your comfort zone and to go and minister with people outside of your normal sphere of influence? Maybe you heard of others' experiences on short-term missions and you want to experience the same sort of personal transformation they did.

Most likely it was a combination of all of these. We want to explore and see the world but also to do some good while we're at it, and to some extent it is our commitment to the good news of God's kingdom that makes us want to do this. We

also hope we will grow and be shaped by our experiences. We hope to encounter God.

The good news is that these impulses are nothing new. For centuries Christians have traveled for two main reasons: pilgrimage and mission. Pilgrimages focus on personal transformation and spiritual growth. By traveling to a site of historic significance or to see relics of religious value, Christian believers hope to be spiritually transformed, growing closer to God.

Mission travel focuses primarily on transforming the other. Through evangelism, church planting, and physical aid, Christian missionaries hope to plant the kingdom of God into the hearts of those who may not know the gospel of Jesus. In doing so they hope to change the other, to transform their hearts to be more attuned to the call to follow Jesus, and to transform their present existence by working to improve health, education, and economic stability.

What we hope *PilgriMission* will do for you is help you take the best of each of these motivations and use them to help transform the world by being transformed ourselves. That is why we are offering you neither a pilgrimage guide nor a mission guide, but a *PilgriMission* guide.



Here is what you'll find in these pages:

1. **Up next you'll find a section that offers some guidance on how to make the most of your mission experience.** Read it carefully, and take it to heart.
2. **Your pre-trip journal is a space for you to begin thinking about what will take place during your journey.** The goal is to complete each section before your group meets to discuss the given topic. This way you will be prepared to offer your own insights and to be blessed by the insights of your fellow travelers.
3. **The during-the-trip devotional journal includes a morning devotion and prayer as well as space to journal.** Spend some quiet time with God every morning by praying through the scripture passage and reflecting on what the author has to say. Then, throughout the day, pray the one-line breath prayer that is provided so God can use it to guide your eyes, thoughts, and reflections. If possible and appropriate, carry this book with you to record things you see and think. At the end of the day your group will reflect on these things together.

4. **At the end is your post-trip journal, which is intended to help you take what you learn from God and others on your trip and apply it at home.** Again, the goal is to complete your journal activities before the group comes together. In that way you can make the most of your conversation together.

Dos and Don'ts of the PilgriMission Experience

Now that you've decided to participate in this PilgriMission experience, it's time to begin to think about what that means. You will be bearing witness to the good news of Jesus Christ through actions and perhaps through words to people you do not know. That is no small thing, so it's helpful for us to lay out some dos and don'ts of short-term missions.

Don't ignore the pre- and post-trip parts of this study. Do realize that your experience is more than a week on the field and that the before and after components are just as important as the time you spend away from home.

Don't go thinking that you are taking Jesus somewhere he isn't already present. Do realize that Jesus is already working everywhere we go and that many times the local believers we encounter have a closer relationship with him than we do.

It is our conviction that short-term mission trips ought to be transformational for both those who go and those who host mission teams. Both the mission teams and their hosts have much to offer and much to gain.

Don't take too many pictures. Even better, don't take any pictures at all. Taking too many pictures makes it seem like you don't care for the people, but that instead you only want to observe them. Do choose one person in your group to take pictures (this can change daily), and then spend the time you would have been snapping photos to really build relationships with the people you would have been photographing.

Don't consider differences in culture to be inherently good or bad. Do be open to experiencing new things and seeing the world and the gospel through the eyes of those with whom you are working.

Don't do things you wouldn't do at home. Do strive to learn new things that can change the way you minister at home.

Don't give away things to anyone. You may feel in your heart to give something to someone you perceive to be in hardship. Giving away things like this, however, can do more harm than good. If you really feel the need to give, however, do so through the appropriate channel. The field personnel or agency you are working with will know the best way to get your resources into the hands of the right people.

Don't give in to the temptation to believe that you are their savior. Do realize that your work is a small part in the overall ministry that is taking place. That doesn't diminish what you do, but it does remind you that God's work is always bigger than our individual effort.

Don't spend so much time working that you forget to build relationships and that you don't have time to reflect and process what

you are experiencing. Do know that what the people you work with will remember more than anything is that you cared enough to get to know them and their story.

Don't go home and think that your mission is complete. Do realize that, upon returning home, there is a deep need to continue to support the long-term ministry you worked with as well as a deep need to minister effectively in your own community.

There are many more dos and don'ts that could be offered here, but we'll finish with one more. Don't go thinking you have all the answers. Instead, do go with a sense of humility, always deferring to the agency or field personnel with which you are working and the locals you are serving. They will be able to guide you through the difficulties of short-term mission experiences so your time spent on the field is meaningful for you and helpful in their ministry setting.

Now go and transform the world by being transformed!

Using This Journal

Journaling is a highly personal venture. Some people find it helpful to write prayers to God; others use the space to process their thoughts and work out ideas. Other people find it helpful to draw pictures or color. Others write poems or songs. Others simply doodle on the pages as they think about God, reflect upon scriptures, and pray.

All of these ways of journaling are okay, so as you use this journal, don't feel as if you are forced to do something that does not feel right for you, but do feel the freedom to experiment and see how God may speak to you in unexpected ways.

As you sit down to read these devotions and journal, try hard to find quiet places away

Realize that Jesus is already working everywhere we go and that many times the local believers we encounter have a closer relationship with him than we do.

from distractions. Also try to find places that are comfortable. Relax yourself for a few moments before starting by breathing deeply, allowing God's spirit to calm you. In those moments open your heart to God, praying that God will speak to you in the moments that lay ahead.

In the pages that follow there is a lot of blank space, and not necessarily questions asked for you to fill it in. Allow the Spirit to prompt you in what you should write down. You'll also notice there is only one session that corresponds to each pre- and post-trip study. We encourage you to revisit these same pages two or three times before your group meets together, each time allowing and expecting God to reveal new insights into Scripture and mission.

Mission to the Body and Spirit

Matthew 25:31-46; 28:16-20

Read Matthew 25:31-46 slowly several times. Ask God to speak through the words of the scriptures. Pay attention to any words that jump off the page at you. Ask this question of the text: What does this passage have to say about the way in which we do missions?

As you prayerfully read and reflect on the passage, use this space to process your experience. You can write, draw a picture, compose a poem, etc.



Now slowly read Matthew 28:16-20 several times. What jumps out at you this time? Are there any words, phrases, or images that startle you? Pay attention to what this passage is saying about mission.

As you prayerfully read and reflect on the passage, use the space below to process your experience. You can write, draw a picture, compose a poem, etc.

Now answer this question: To you, what is mission? Write your answer, and be prepared to discuss this with your group.

Understanding Culture

Daniel 1:17-20

Daniel and his friends lived in exile in Babylon. They were far from everything that reminded them of home: food, music, religion, friends, family, and much more. They were in a cross-cultural setting.

With that in mind, read these verses slowly, out loud, several times. What words, concepts, emotions, or themes jump out at you? What strikes you?

As you prayerfully read and reflect on the passage, use the space below to process your experience. You can write, draw a picture, compose a poem, etc.



What is culture?

[illegible][illegible]

Mission as Relationship

Philippians 2:3-5

Read these verses slowly, out loud. Are there any words or phrases that stand out to you? Write them below, and spend a few moments pondering them.

[illegible]

Read the verses again, asking God to open your eyes and your heart to this passage, especially the words or phrases that you wrote above. Ask God why those words are important for you today?

[illegible]

[illegible]

Mission as Incarnation

John 1:1-18

Read the text slowly. This first time, notice what the text says about Jesus, the Word. What jumps out at you in your reading of this text?

[illegible]

Read the text again. This time, think about how we are called to be like Christ. What does that mean for us? What does this passage say to us as Christians, who are to follow Jesus' example?

[illegible]

[illegible][illegible]

In the following pages you will find a variety of devotions that you can use during your trip to focus your thoughts and reflections throughout the day. You may not use all of these devotions during your trip, because not every trip will benefit from the same reflections. Your group leader will select a devotion per day for your group. Prayerfully read through the devotion in the morning before you begin your day, and journal any thoughts that come to mind.

At the end of each devotion is a “breath prayer.” These are short prayers that you can recite throughout the day. The idea is that this prayer mimics the rhythm of your breathing and that praying this prayer becomes just as natural and life-giving as breathing.

Allow God, through this prayer, to guide your eyes, your mind, and your heart throughout the day. At the end of the day, your group will debrief what you have experienced. This will be a good time to share anything God revealed to you through this prayerful practice.

Mission as Spiritual Formation

Matthew 5:13-16

Read this passage reflectively two or three times. In your reading find a word or a short phrase that engages your imagination for today. What is this text asking of you? What is your response to this teaching of Jesus?

Morning Devotion

Salt and light. Jesus chooses two common images to capture the essence of Christian faith. Here, Jesus is saying, “A little faith goes a long way.” That’s it. All you need is a little faith to change your world. Even one small candle can bring light and hope into the darkest cavern.

When your faith (salt/light) joins with that of others, you participate in the great mystery of divine life. God is at work in our world, combining our salt and light with God’s ongoing mission in creation. And today is no different: God is out there right now—in this broken



and beautiful world of ours—healing, redeeming, and restoring creation. Will you contribute your light? Will you sprinkle your salt? Will you learn to appreciate the salt and light others might bring? A little goes a long way.

Today, you are called to be salt and light in this very place of mission. Perhaps you decided to embark on this journey for a change of scenery. Perhaps God has given you a heart for serving others, even as you learn from the different cultures and traditions in this place of service.

Journal

[illegible]

If you have come here to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together.

Another way to phrase Watson's powerful words is to say, "My spiritual formation is bound up with yours. Therefore, let us work together."

Go forth to share your salt and light today. For in this sacred sharing, God allows our salt and light to mingle with that of others working toward God's mission in the world—to make all things new!

— Blake Kendrick

Breath Prayer

Lord of all, give me courage today to be salt and light.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



Engaging Cross-Culturally

Revelation 7:9-10

Read this passage reflectively two or three times. What about this scene speaks to you, surprises you? What is this text asking of you? What is your response to this passage of Scripture?

Morning Devotion

She is soon to earn her Ph.D. in physics at a major university here in the United States. She has taught undergraduate physics labs in English for the past two years. Yet when we got to the ticket booth at the movie theater, she turned to me and said, “What should I say?” I was completely perplexed! I responded, “You simply say, ‘Two adults for Cinderella, please.’” (Yes, she is thirty years old and a Ph.D. candidate, and she loves the story of Cinderella!) She explained that if she is at the theater, she tries to not have to ask for the tickets. If she is at a major event like a football

game, she will not get anything to eat from the food stand by herself because she will have to speak to place an order. Too often in her four years here in the United States, when she speaks with an accent, people frown at her, get upset because they don’t understand, or point-blank tell her that her English is bad. (It isn’t, I might add.) It has turned a vivacious, confident, brilliant scientist into a timid, awkward child. What does it mean to engage with and respect other cultures? It means welcoming as the Lamb on the throne welcomes.

The veiled woman at the mall? You may be standing next to her. The migrant worker who cannot speak English? He will be crying out with you, “Salvation belongs to the Lord!” The brilliant university student from another country who seems too shy to even speak? She will be waving a palm branch with exuberance in front of everyone. The ragged, confused refugee who is asking for a little help? He will call this kingdom home, just like you do. The very first step in engaging with and respecting those of other cultures is to realize that one day you will be shoulder to shoulder standing together before the throne. The second step is to cease treating the other as the other. Rather, every time we look into a face that is racially different, every time we hear a language or accent that we do not understand, every time we see someone dressed differently or waving a flag from another country, we must see them as one God will welcome to the throne just as openly as God will welcome us.

Do you know what I love most about this passage? There is no assimilation. One group’s language or cultural mores do not resemble the others. Rather there is beautiful, colorful, exciting diversity! There is no separation. They are all represented! Every nation, all tribes and peoples and languages...all there *together*! Rather than being separate, they are unified in their worship of the Lamb. There is no integration, trying to blend cultures into a more dominant culture. No one culture,

tribe, or nation dominates. They are equally welcomed. There is no marginalization, with some cultures being of less importance or less powerful or being edged out. They all have a voice, and all are heard. They are all standing. They are all robed in white.

Thy will be done, Thy kingdom come, on earth as it is in heaven (Mt 6:10). If we pray that in all sincerity, then we need to begin treating and living Revelation 7 as a reality now. The picture in Revelation 7 is not just a weird, incomprehensible heavenly worship service. It is our invitation to join God and a great multitude today in what is already happening. It is our invitation to be a part of God's multi-lingual, multicultural, multiracial, multiethnic kingdom right here, right now.

Prayer: Lamb upon the throne, thank you for inviting me into your kingdom. Thank you for the beautiful diversity I see there. Thank you for making each of us unique. Help me welcome each person I meet as one equally longed for to join in your kingdom. Help me not be blind to differences, but rather to appreciate and embrace them. Help me learn more about myself as your child and more about others as I recognize differences. As I greet those from other ethnic, religious, cultural, and racial backgrounds, help me remember that in your kingdom there is no political agenda. The only agenda is true, sincere worship. Help me worship in truth and sincerity as I welcome the other in your name. Amen.

— Nell Green

Breath Prayer

*Lamb upon the throne, in your name I welcome
the other.*

Journal

[illegible]

[illegible][illegible]

The Tapestry of Mission

Philippians 1:1-11

Read this passage reflectively two or three times. In your reading find a word or a short phrase that engages your imagination for today. What is this text asking of you? What is your response to what Paul is writing here?

Morning Devotion

Grace and peace to you, church on mission. You are wholly and dearly loved! You are bringing the kingdom of heaven to earth now. You are fulfilling God's purpose for the church—to be those who go, who serve, who love, who give, who live in the light and hope of resurrection. The grace and peace of our Lord have followed you on your journey, speaking when you had no words, calming your fear, opening your heart in ways you didn't think possible. You have seen how God doesn't believe the world's definition of hopeless, for you have seen hope in the eyes of children, in the hearts of mothers, in the words of community leaders. This is gospel work, gospel hope. Hope is good news.

Church, you are partners in this work. Soon you will return home, but you take a part of this work back with you and leave a part of yourself here. Oh, the joy in this partnership! Oh, how thankful we are! Your work is like a thread in a great tapestry that is telling the story of a community loved by God. Your thread represents the work you've done while you are in the field. As you work, it is being delicately and intricately woven into the tapestry, next to the thread placed there by year-round programs that happen after you return home. Next to that, local partners weave into the story, giving it direction and grounding.



Look at the beautiful thread added by churches that will come walk next to your new friends in this community. And bright and beautiful is the thread of the children in this community, growing bigger and bigger until they lead your eyes around the tapestry, lead their community and their home.

Step back for a minute, church. Look. See the beauty of how your work is woven into the work of others. Our God is creating this thing! He is taking what you have done, joining it with what has been done before you arrived, adding what will happen when you are away from this place, and is *faithful to complete it*. Even when we don't see our work come to completion, God is faithful.

May you find freedom in that! May you rest in it. May you be humbled by it. May you give generously and love fearlessly, knowing you are a part of bringing God's kingdom to earth now. You are not alone; you are part of a community of brothers and sisters in Christ.

It's likely that your heart has burst open during your time on the field. It's likely that your world has opened up. It's likely that you see yourself, each other, and God in fresh and beautiful ways. It's likely that you discovered a gift you didn't know you had or used a gift you knew you had in a way you hadn't dreamed.

[illegible][illegible][illegible][illegible][illegible][illegible][illegible]



Helping the Whole Person

Mark 10:46-52

Read this passage reflectively two or three times. What about this healing story surprises you? Is there anything in this passage you wouldn't expect? What is this text asking of you? What is your response to this passage about Jesus'?

Morning Devotion

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation had plenty of money and a commitment to wipe out malaria in Africa. They bought thousands of bed nets for people who were at risk of catching malaria and distributed them to villages. When researchers returned to these villages to test for a decrease in malaria, they found that malaria had not decreased. In fact, many bed nets had been used principally as fishing nets, and those using the nets this way were getting sick because the nets were sprayed with an insect-repelling chemical.

One could fill volumes of books with stories like this one. They prove that the will to do good does not always result in good being done. This is true in ministry as well. Often, in our attempts to help, we fail to understand the totality of a person's situation, and an intervention that looks smart initially does more harm than good.

The story of Jesus' healing of the blind man Bartimaeus would appear to be a fairly routine story of healing in Mark, but within the story Jesus does an interesting thing. Here is Bartimaeus, a blind beggar. By this point in the book of Mark, everyone knows Jesus is a healer. When a healer meets a blind beggar in the road, everyone knows the healer is supposed to heal the blindness. Jesus does that, but not before he takes the time to ask Bartimaeus, "What is it that you want me to do for you?"

On a short-term mission trip there are significant constraints on our ability to do holistic ministry. Because our engagement with the people is not long enough for us to fully understand their lives at a deep level, we cannot fully develop a holistic ministry in the time we are serving. But what anyone can do, even if engaged in missions for only a few minutes, is begin with the simple question Jesus asks of Bartimaeus: "What is it you want me to do for you?"

This sounds so simple, but it is amazing how seldom it is asked by those coming to do mission work in distressed communities around the globe. We very often carry with us assumptions that we *know* what "those people" really need, and we set about our work. Yet the first step to holistic ministry is to shelve this assumption in favor of simply asking how we can help rather than making the presumption that we already know the answer. I believe Jesus uses his healing power to restore Bartimaeus's sight, but he uses his simple question to restore Bartimaeus's dignity (it is reasonable to suspect that in first-century Palestine,

[illegible]

[illegible]

Loving Your Rural Neighbor

Luke 15:1-7

Read this passage reflectively two or three times. In your reading find a word or a short phrase that engages your imagination for today. What is this text asking of you? What is your response to this teaching of Jesus?

Morning Devotion

In a booming voice, a seminary professor proclaimed that the future of the church and missions is located in urban areas (his logic being that urban areas are growing at a rapid rate, so ministers and congregations should focus their ministries on those communities). Go where the multitude is located to fulfill the gospel!

But what if you live in the only house on a gravel road in rural America?

Close to a fifth of Americans still live in small towns and country communities, but living in rural American can be unexpectedly challenging. Eighty-five percent of “persistent poverty” counties in the United States are rural counties (“persistent poverty” means twenty percent of a county’s population has been living in poverty for over thirty years). Rural communities have struggled for decades with poverty, brain drain, minimal government involvement, and few structured resources. Very little investment from churches and nonprofits has contributed to the struggle. Unfortunately, these struggles have been consistently marginalized or ignored by American culture.

The parable of the lost sheep in Luke speaks to the missional charge of seeking those on the margins of our culture, regardless of



urban or rural location. In contrast to the seminary professor, Jesus is not concerned with only reaching out to high numbers or highly concentrated communities. Instead, reaching out and serving the one or the few is just as important as serving the multitude. Neither is more deserving, but both are equally important to the church.

Yet by heavily emphasizing care for our urban neighbors, have we as the church accidentally contributed to pushing our rural neighbors further to the margins? This is unfortunate given the wealth of knowledge and ministry our rural neighbors can offer. Want to learn about a slower pace of life? Ask a rural neighbor to teach you how to shoot the breeze. Curious how a community can feel like a big family? Let a rural neighbor tell you their family history and connections. Have a new and innovative ministry idea? Partner with a rural neighbor who can help see it through. Want to impact and change a system? Invest in a rural neighbor to transform an entire system for a fraction of what it costs elsewhere.

Both rural and urban neighbors have strengths and knowledge to share. Let’s serve with and celebrate them both!

Prayer: Dear Lord, a prayer for our rural neighbors.

For those who are forgotten or under-served because of isolation.

We pray for our rural neighbors.

For the communities facing the effects of persistent poverty.

We pray for our rural neighbors.

For myths of plenty to eat and access to basic services like clean water and Internet.

We pray for our rural neighbors.

For the strengths and challenges of living
in a rural community.

We pray for our rural neighbors.

For remembering all are worthy of love
and service in your eyes, both rural
and urban.

We pray for all our neighbors.

—Jenny Hodge

Breath Prayer

Open my eyes to the beauty and strength of my rural neighbors.

Journal



Loving Your Urban Neighbor

Jeremiah 29:7

Read this verse reflectively several times. In your reading find a word that jumps out at you. What is this text asking of you? What is this verse teaching you this morning?

Morning Devotion

When you read the phrase “city streets,” what are the first images that pop into your mind? If you are like many Americans, you have seen negative adjectives added to that phrase (think “mean city streets” or “tough city streets”). Too often, our understandings of what God might do in a city are handed to us more by our American culture than our Bibles. On our missions endeavors we might be tempted to portray the city where we are going as more difficult or less inhabited by God than the place from where we have come.

Yet when one reads Scripture, God is often moving in and among cities. Early in Genesis, God’s harsh justice is unleashed on two of the

first cities mentioned in the Bible in Sodom and Gomorrah. And in Revelation, God’s return is described as coming within the boundaries of a “new Jerusalem,” a holy city where justice and peace (and some very nice streets) are the norm.

In Jeremiah 29 the people of Israel have just been defeated and hauled off to Babylon, the largest and most powerful city of their day. There are those in this group who want to despise their new home and see it as God-forsaken. Yet the word of God comes to Jeremiah that the people are to settle in Babylon, build homes there, and actually seek the good of the city where they have landed in their misfortune. “For in the city’s welfare, you will find your welfare,” Jeremiah says.

The way NOT to do ministry in an urban area is to label the community where we are working as vastly different than our own and distance ourselves from feeling a sense of identity with these communities. Sometimes this can happen with mission teams that only look at the bad things that occur in cities. But the Bible is clear that God does not forsake the city. God loves the city and calls us to do the same. Indeed, God calls us to understand the problems of the city as our own problems, and God calls us to seek the welfare of the city because this is also a way of seeking our own welfare. In Jeremiah, God is not just calling us to sympathy for the city (feeling bad for the city from a position of perceived privilege); rather, God is calling us to solidarity with the city (understanding that the problems of a city are our own problems).

When we understand the value God places on the city, we also understand the value God places on the inhabitants of the city. God has been in any city we may visit before our short-term mission arrives, and God will be there long after we are gone. Our task is to listen and learn and love people in a way that affirms that God can and does act in their midst.

Prayer: Holy God, you have so often been active in the cities of the world. Help me have eyes to see and ears to hear how you are active in my midst today. I pray for the welfare of our cities, and I pray for the grace to take the welfare of the city as my own.

— Bill Stanfield

Breath Prayer

God, give me eyes to see and ears to hear your activity in this city today.

Journal

God Was Here Before You

Acts 10:1-23

Read this extended passage once through. Is there a verse or a section that stands out to you? Reflect on that section for a few moments, allowing the Holy Spirit to teach you through your meditation.

Morning Devotion

Bertolomé de las Casas was a Spanish missionary who came to the Americas shortly after Columbus “discovered” these new lands. Over time, de las Casas realized that what he saw the Spanish conquistadors doing in the new world was antithetical to the gospel. He recorded how they slaughtered entire populations if they would not accept the gospel *and* the rule of the Spanish crown. See, the other missionaries believed that the indigenous people in the Americas were godless, pagan people who did not deserve life unless they accepted their limited, Spanish-Catholic form of Christianity. De las Casas differed. He taught that God had been present all along and that these people may not be Christian but that God could still be at work within them. He taught that even without accepting Christianity, they reflected the image of God.

God is present and at work in places that do not look like what we understand to be holy or sacred.

A similar thing is happening in this passage from Acts 10. For many people like Peter, it would have been impossible to believe that God could be at work in a pagan Roman military commander, but the fact of the matter is that God was very active in his life. God worked to draw the centurion to Peter so he



could join the Way. In order for that to happen, though, Peter had to overcome some of his own prejudices and judgments.

Sometimes when we go on short-term mission trips, we act as if we are the saviors of the people we are going to serve. We treat them as if they are completely ignorant of God and of God’s work among them. We tell ourselves that we are taking Jesus to the deep, dark places of our world. To fix this we need to address some of our own prejudices about the people and places we are going to serve.

The truth of the matter is that Jesus was there long before we even considered going there. God has been at work in the troubled areas of our world, and in many cases when we enter the mission field, we will encounter people whose faith and reliance on God puts ours to shame. Mission is more about our discerning and encountering God’s presence in unexpected places and then joining God in the work that is already taking place.

So, today, pray that you can see how God has been at work in the community long before you arrived. Ask to see what God is up to, and then you can join with the local people in their service to God.

— Blake Hart

Breath Prayer

God, show me your hand at work among my newfound friends.

Journal

[illegible]

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Mission as Lifestyle

Numbers 13–14

Study

You made it. You survived your Pilgri-Mission experience as you took in the new sights, tastes, and sounds of an unfamiliar place. God showed up, helped you make a difference, and impacted your heart as well. So now what? Is it just meant to be a “great experience,” or is it meant to carry into your everyday life?

Leaving the mountaintop moments of this experience can leave you feeling exhilarated. Or it may cause you to enter Walmart and wonder, “Why do we need so many shampoos?” Or you may be angered at the sight of seeing someone take a thirty-minute shower after witnessing a family walk to a cold river to bathe. Whatever you’re feeling, it’s normal. Entering new terrain can alter your thoughts and feelings, and it is healthy to process them.

Before you unpack your bags, journey

with me one more time. Open your Bible to Numbers 13:1-2, 17-20, 25, and take an adventure with the Israelite leaders assigned to explore the land of Canaan. These were twelve spies who were sent to check out the promised land and share their report.

To begin your reentry home, what you share with others is important. It can inspire others to reach out in faith to the unknown, or it may keep them settled on their comfortable couches. Even Jesus’ powerful teachings were in the form of sharing stories.

What will be your testimony or “report”? Will it be full of complaints regarding another culture, or will it be shared through the eyes of God’s amazing blessings?

Upon their return, there were two different perspectives. Continue reading Numbers 13:26-33 and 14:6-9. Joshua and Caleb were counted among those who gave the “minority report.” They saw God’s goodness, abundant fruit, and the promise that God was with them. Unlike their colleagues, who were fearful of what they saw and how it would impact their lives, Joshua and Caleb were willing to grab hold of God’s new lifestyle. It was a critical time, as their future depended on whether they remained in the wilderness or ventured with God on his path. They were at a crossroads of decision before everyday life could go on.

“Missions is not something to add to your ‘to-do’ list but rather is a part of who ‘to be’ in Christ.”

In order to go on a mission trip and then to entertain making it a part of everyday life once you return, you must evaluate your current situation. Where is God at work in your life? What new terrain does

God want you to explore right where you are? What “giants” stand in the way of continuing to live missionally?

It is important to remember that the purpose of missions is to be a blessing to others, but the PilgriMission journey is also intended for you to grow in the Lord. As you are processing your experience, be aware that missions is not something you add to your “to-do” list but rather is a part of who “to be” in Christ. It’s the daily choice to go and serve, being willing to risk all for the sake of God’s cause and to reach those in need of his love and salvation. Here are some examples of people I know who are on mission as a normal part of their daily lives...

- Claudia and Felipe take in their niece during the school week to tutor and help her with her reading.
- Maria and Timoteo and their four children take in three malnourished, at-risk children to care for them.
- Pablo, a giving teenager, has a juice stand to make money for an anti-trafficking rescue home.
- Anita takes the knives from her friend who is having suicidal thoughts to keep her safe and remind her of God’s plan for her life.
- Marisa, a compassionate staff member who barely makes ends meet, helps her needy neighbors and uses some of her vacation time to assist her sick, widowed mother.
- Juan, a local leader, is a prayer warrior for taxi drivers and people on a local bus while they travel.

To incorporate missions as a lifestyle, it fundamentally comes down to a choice—whether to continue your current activities and commitments or to change based on where God’s promised land is for you. Again, this is a critical time; otherwise, life on the “treadmill of busyness” and normalcy will resume.

“To incorporate missions as a lifestyle, it fundamentally comes down to a choice.”

Now, want to see the results of Joshua and Caleb’s choice? Read Numbers 14:24, 30. We see that Joshua was allowed to go into the promised land along with Caleb because they had a different spirit and followed the Lord wholeheartedly. Unlike these daring leaders, the remaining Israelites, who were originally counted in the census, were prohibited from entering the land due to their complaining and unbelief. Joshua and Caleb’s belief in God and God’s plan demonstrated courageousness as they chose to take a high view of God and not look at their circumstances. A great lesson to be learned is to choose not to be like the other spies but to be willing to truly follow the Lord and believe that God’s plan is best.

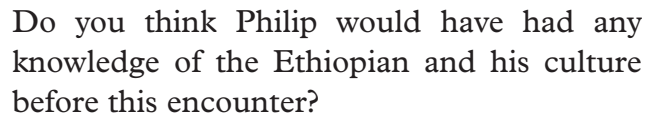
So as you process your experience from your trip in the coming weeks and months, what emotions are you feeling? What are you doing that competes with God’s best for you? And where do you need to take a step of faith and believe God?

As your mission trip unfolds in your mind, may you remember Jeremiah’s words: “For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” Feel free to meet with your team members to discuss your emotions, any challenges of re-assimilating back into everyday life, and what to do now.

But tell your story. Dare to live differently and wholeheartedly for God. Face your giants. Choose a lifestyle full of faith. Be prepared for an adventure with God as God leads you into the promised land.

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Does anything strike you about their exchange—the way they interact?

Read through this passage slowly. Does anything strike you in your first reading? What words, phrases, or verses stand out?

What are your first thoughts about Philip's encounter with the Ethiopian?

Post-Trip Journal

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Being Part of the Long-Term Mission There

1 Corinthians 1:4-9; 16:1-9

Read 1 Corinthians 1:4-9. Think about Paul's relationship with the Corinthian Christians.

What stands out to you in this passage? What can we learn about Paul's relationship with this church by reading this passage?

Think back to the people you worked with. Do any of Paul's words resonate with you as you think of those you encountered on your journey?



Now read 1 Corinthians 16:1-9.

What do Paul's future plans tell you about his relationship with the church in Corinth?

What does Paul's example of long-term connection to the places he served mean for us? What would it look like for you to maintain a long-term connection to the people you served with while on the field?

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Being Part of the Long-Term Mission Here

Acts 2:42-47

Read through this passage slowly. What strikes you about the activities of the early church? Is there anything the early church did that stuck out to you? Spend some time asking God why that part of this passage stands out.

Write down the activity of the church that stood out to you.

How is this activity demonstrated in your church?

How do you participate in this activity?

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Jay Kieve is the coordinator for the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of South Carolina. Before this he served three churches over twenty years of congregational ministry. He holds a Doctor of Ministry degree from the Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond and Master of Theology and Master of Divinity degrees from Duke University Divinity School. Visit www.cbfdc.org to learn more about the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of South Carolina.

Bibliography for Further Study

Below is a list of books that we have found helpful as we think about and plan short-term missions. Some have been influential in the development of this resource, and for that we are grateful.

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