



Ray & Lidia Zirkel
The Methodist Church of Costa Rica
ray.zirkel@gmail.com

Dear Prospective Intern,

Warmest greetings from Costa Rica! We pray all is well with you and that you are enjoying the many blessings of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

With 2011 upon us, we hope to continue expanding the influence of God's Kingdom in Costa Rica, while building up His church in this part of the world. Our goals for the upcoming year are to finish construction on the Medical Clinic in Puerto Viejo de Sarapiquí, assist local congregations in the area, and begin work on the second house at the Methodist Children's Home in Coronado. But we cannot do it without the continued blessings of the Lord and the support of willing interns and mission teams.

We would love for you to prayerfully consider joining our mission, helping us build new churches, the Medical Clinic, and the Methodist Children's Home. You would also have the chance to minister to the local church congregations and communities through teaching Vacation Bible School lessons, sharing with the Methodist School elementary and high school students, and participating in other various forms of evangelism and outreach.

It is our prayer that you will be strengthened in your own personal relationship with Christ through the multiple areas of ministry in which you would be involved in while in Costa Rica. In addition, we pray that you would offer support and encouragement to Costa Rican Christians and non-Christians alike, so that the Church's mission might be fulfilled as more people come to know Christ and are incorporated into the local church where they can be nurtured and disciplined.

In an effort to provide you with easy-access information about the Methodist Church of Costa Rica and our internship, we have put together this "Intern Information Packet" and hope that you find it useful. Please take a few minutes to read through the information thoroughly, as there's a good chance it will answer many of your questions.

Feel free to contact us (ray.zirkel@gmail.com) or our current head intern Allison Adams (allison.adams09@gmail.com) with any further questions or concerns that you may have.

We give our Lord tremendous thanks for your consideration of this internship, and please remember that we are praying for you and your decision.

In Christ's name and for His glory,
Ray & Lidia



THE METHODIST CHURCH OF COSTA RICA
Volunteers in Ministry
Outreach Program for 2011
Intern Information Packet

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INTRODUCTION

History of our Ministry

In 1995, we were invited by Dr. Luis Palomo, Bishop, to minister with the Methodist Church in Costa Rica. Ray is an ordained elder in the Methodist Church and serves as a professor at the Evangelical Methodist Seminary. Ray works closely with his seminary students and Bishop Palomo to help plant and develop local church congregations throughout Costa Rica. In addition, Ray is a member of the Board of Directors of the Methodist High School and Elementary School in San José.

We are currently working with the child welfare agency and the Methodist Church to build the Methodist Children's Home in Coronado, just 10 miles northeast of San José. We are also helping to build a Children's Community Center and church sanctuary in Puerto Viejo de Sarapiquí, 60 miles northeast of San José. To help us with construction, Vacation Bible School, and a variety of other church-related projects, we host 25 to 30 short-term Missionary Teams each year from all over the United States.

How Interns Can Help

The Methodist Church has expanded from 45 to 115 local church congregations in the past 15 years. With such rapid growth of congregations, the seminary, and the Methodist Church as a whole, we have had our hands full for a number of years—and that doesn't even include trying to raise our two young daughters, Sarah and Emma.

In the summer of 2007, we were blessed with the opportunity to have an intern host mission teams with us for eight weeks. In the summer of 2008, another intern hosted mission teams for four weeks, and then we had one more intern latch on to host mission teams and serve with us for a full two-year commitment. In 2010 this intern continued and we had an additional 5 folks who spent the summer working with us and at times we could have used more!!!. After only three years, we've already seen how much of a blessing these interns can be to our ministry.

We ask that you would prayerfully consider a summer, spring, fall, one-year, or two-year internship with us so that we may all be used to our fullest potential while continuing the Lord's work in Costa Rica.

Options for Internships

We currently offer 4 distinct intern positions: Summer Team Intern, Full-time Ministry Intern, Methodist School Teaching Assistant and Methodist School Christian Counselor. The job descriptions are covered in more detail on page 6. But before you go there, read about our ministry first . . .

MINISTRY DETAILS

Methodist Children's Home

Coronado, Costa Rica (10 miles NE of San José)

For many years we have sensed God calling us to minister in a more direct manner to the children of Costa Rica. In March of 2007, through the financial gifts of several donors, we were able to purchase 7 acres in Coronado, a suburb of San José located northeast of downtown. With God's help, it is our desire to develop a loving Christian community where children can grow in their knowledge of Christ and receive the love and nurturing that all children need to grow and mature.

We currently have an "administrative house" that was on the property when we purchased it, and to which we have since added on. One half of the house will serve as housing for small missionary teams, ministry interns and administrative offices; the other half is the home of Jose and Carmen and their children, our property caretakers.

We have recently received building permits that have allowed us to begin construction on the first of five houses that we hope to build on the property. Mission teams from the USA have already been a tremendous help in this process, and we hope that we will begin work on our multi-purpose gym/classroom facility by the end of this year. Our master plan calls for five homes, a playground, soccer field, an outdoor chapel area, the multi-purpose building and administrative offices. When the project is complete, our desire is to provide a loving home for approximately 40 to 50 children.

As of this writing, (Jan. 2011) we are planning the dedication of the first house for March 16, 2011. This means that by summer we will be ready to start house number 2!!!!

Children's Worship Center and Methodist Medical Clinic

Puerto Viejo de Sarapiquí, Costa Rica (60 miles northeast of San José, 18 miles south of Nicaragua)

Our first project on this site is a Children's Worship Center / church building for the Ágape Evangelical Methodist Church in Puerto Viejo. It consists of a sanctuary,

classrooms, a pastor's office, bathrooms, and a caretaker's apartment. The facility will serve as home to the church, to a feeding kitchen, to a clothes closet and to an educational center. We were able to finish the sanctuary and classroom of this project in August of 2010, but still have the feeding center, clothes closet, and apartment elements to finish.

Puerto Viejo has about 30,000-35,000 inhabitants, with about half being 18 years old or younger. According to the Costa Rican government, 41% of 16 year-olds in Costa Rica are no longer attending school. Take a rural area like Puerto Viejo, where the percentage would most likely be higher, and you're looking at a large number of youth who are not finishing their education.

Therefore, our goal with this church is to not only create a worship space for a growing 200-member church, but also to create a haven for youth. As mentioned before, we will offer a feeding kitchen, a clothes closet, and an education/tutoring center. Our goal is to transform the Puerto Viejo community by reaching the youth first.

Our second project on this site is a Medical Clinic. Our goal is to provide medical care for those who do not have access to Costa Rica's social healthcare system (basically, the jobless and the undocumented). There are many Nicaraguan immigrants in Costa Rica, especially in areas like Puerto Viejo, where banana and pineapple plantation jobs are in abundance. Because many of those immigrants do not have Costa Rican ID's, they cannot obtain access to healthcare—private care is far too expensive. Our goal is to change that.

We have begun construction on the medical clinic and hope to have it, completely finished during the summer of 2011.

Local Methodist Churches

All over San José and Sarapiquí, Costa Rica

One of the best parts of teams' mission trips is when they get to simply love on the Costa Rican children. As an intern, you'll definitely get to be a part of this ministry, helping teams lead Vacation Bible Schools for many local churches in San José and Sarapiquí. You'll help teach Bible lessons, participate in skits, make crafts and play games for and with all the little children. It's good.

In addition to VBS, there are two churches with up and running soup kitchens for kids, as well as numerous churches with kids' clubs and youth groups on the weekends. Your fun in church will never end.

Methodist School (Colegio Metodista)

Sabanilla, Costa Rica (5 minutes northeast of downtown San José)

Methodist missionaries founded the Methodist School in 1921. For the last 90 years it has been the leading Christian educational school in Costa Rica. The Methodist School is a private, K-11 (that's senior year here), bilingual institution. It is located in Sabanilla, east of downtown San José. The school is committed to exalting Jesus Christ in every aspect of its academics, sports, arts, and administration.

Ray has been a member of the Board of Directors for 12 years and is currently serving as its President.

Methodist Seminary

Alajuela, Costa Rica (dónde el aeropuerto, to the west of San José)

In 1989, Bishop Luis Fernando Palomo founded the Methodist Seminary. Since its inception, it has played a vital role in the formation of pastors and leaders for the Methodist Church. The Seminary campus in San Pedro only 5 minutes from downtown San Jose. There are approximately 50 students enrolled in the main campus. Plus, additional lay students attend our numerous regional seminaries.

Seminary students attend intensive one week sessions held the first week of every month. Two morning and two afternoon sessions are held daily. In addition, visiting professors or invited speakers will conduct workshops or special training seminars during the week.

Ray serves as a full professor teaching classes in Church History, Wesleyan Theology, Inductive Bible Study, New Testament, the Pentateuch, Biblical Doctrine of Holiness, Missions and Anthropology.

JOB DESCRIPTIONS

Summer Team Intern

Each summer, from late May to early August, we have American mission teams come to Costa Rica to help us with our building projects. And each summer, the workload gets bigger and bigger.

Our desire is to have four Summer Team Interns every summer, who will serve with us from late May until early August. The interns would have an opportunity to work on multiple mission projects, including the Methodist Children's Home and the Methodist Medical Clinic. The interns will help host the American mission teams, working right along side them for the entirety of the summer, doing construction in the morning and Vacation Bible Schools in the afternoon.

The Summer Team Interns would work in pairs, one pair in San José and the other pair in Sarapiquí. Each pair will, ideally, have a Full-time Ministry Intern working with them and doing the majority of the oversight for the construction site, VBS site and lodging site. The Full-time Ministry Interns will provide valuable experience and mentorship for the Summer Team Interns.

This is an unpaid internship, and we expect your monthly costs to be about \$200. In addition to airfare, insurance, we are asking accepted interns to attend a training event in Atlanta, immediately prior to coming to Costa Rica. The cost for this event is \$300 and includes all materials, food and lodging for the 4 days.

Full-time Ministry Intern

With the numerous ministries that we have on our hands down here, including that of raising our family, it is necessary to have full-time help. We have been blessed with two full-time interns over the past 2 years, and we hope the trend will continue.

As a Full-time Ministry Intern, you will have the opportunity to engage yourself in the life of the Methodist Church of Costa Rica, working throughout the country on projects with dozens of churches. You'll help host American mission teams and help with ministry at the Methodist School and Methodist churches throughout the Costa Rica.

You'll serve right alongside Ray, acting as his right-hand man (or woman). For this internship, we ask for at least a two-year commitment. This is an unpaid internship, and we expect your monthly costs to be somewhere around \$1,000.

Methodist School Teaching Assistant

The Methodist School, as mentioned earlier, is a private, bilingual school with over 1,100 students. The school is always in need of more English speakers, and this is where you can put your teaching expertise to practice. You will work first-hand with another English teacher, learning the ropes of the school and opening the door for a full-time teaching position, if you so desire.

The school year in Costa Rica goes from mid-February to early December, so a full-time teaching position would take at least a calendar year commitment. An aid is welcome to come in the middle of the year, but will be even better served if he/she can be available starting in February.

Methodist School Christian Counselor

Both the primary school and the secondary school have full-time Christian Education departments, and they're always in need of more help. If you have a

passion for ministering to students and want to be integrally involved in leading chapel devotions, teaching Christian Education classes, and serving as a spiritual mentor for students, then you'll love working at the Methodist School.

As mentioned above, the Costa Rican school year is mid-February to early December, but since students are not dependent on the Christian Counselor being there from beginning to end, your time frame would be more flexible in reference to your start date.

APPLICATION & ADMIN

Qualifications

We believe that everyone is gifted for God’s ministry, yet we still ask for certain qualifications amongst our interns here in Costa Rica. We ask that (1) an intern have previous mission trip experience, either short-term or long-term, (2) that he/she have a beginner/intermediate level of both oral comprehension and speaking ability in the Spanish language, and (3) that he/she loves the Lord.

Our internship program is a servant ministry. “Interns serve under and with local leadership. As servants, interns focus on the needs of others. They do not put first their own convenience, their accustomed ways, and/or their needs. They try to understand and respect the people and the culture they serve. When interns serve Christ wholeheartedly, they often change their own perspectives and priorities.” (from “Guidelines for VIM Teams Serving in UMCOR Non-Governmental Organization Settings”)

Securing an internship

Completely fill out the application and send it to Ray at ray.zirkel@gmail.com. Be flexible in your time frame, and willing to devote the full amount of time needed to the mission.

Timeline

Before the Internship (4-6 weeks prior to arrival)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Be certain that Ray knows your date and time of arrival, airline and flight number. Write down Ray’s Costa Rican cell phone number, 8340-7125, and have it on hand, in case of an emergency after you arrive.2) Finalize your financial plans. Be sure to have a clear understanding of how your funds can be made available to you in your place of service.3) Ask your pastor to have a brief service of commissioning for you during a regular church service shortly before you go.
Arrival in Costa Rica (within 1-2 weeks of arrival)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Attend Intern Orientation with Ray and other Interns.2) Notify your supporters back home about your arrival, with as complete a description of your volunteer duties as you can give. Thank them for your support and urge their continued prayers for the work you are doing.
During the Internship	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Keep up communication with your family, friends, and home church through emails, letters, a website/blog, or whatever means you have available to you. Frequency will depend on the amount of free time you have available, but try to make

	<p>regular contact with someone who can share your news with others.</p> <p>2) Send copies of your communications to Ray. We want to know how things are going for you.</p>
After the Internship (1-2 weeks after return)	<p>1) Send the “Final Intern Report” to Ray.</p> <p>2) Set up a time when you can report to your home church – to the entire congregation and/or to small groups within the church – and seek other opportunities to share your story.</p> <p>3) Find an appropriate way to say “thank you” to individuals who have supported you financially, or who have been a part of your support group. Let them know they were an important part of your mission.</p>

Orientation and Training

Upon your arrival in Costa Rica, Ray and other interns will lead you through a 2-3 day orientation and training schedule, helping to prepare you for the task at hand and the mission ahead. It is critical that you are able to attend this orientation.

FINANCES

Interns are responsible for their own financial arrangements. Therefore, in order to meet your financial obligations, it is imperative to plan well in advance.

Budget

You should draw up a budget to include the following:

- 1) Travel to and from Costa Rica.
- 2) International health insurance (previous interns have used International Medical Group).
- 3) Living expenses. The amount varies, but the average need for a Summer Team Intern is about \$200 per month. For a Full-time Ministry Intern, it’s better to have at least \$1,000 per month.
- 4) Incidental expenses, depending on your personal needs. Allow for some travel and/or recreation.
- 5) Expenses back at home that you will continue to be responsible for.

Accessing your money in Costa Rica

ATMs are your best bet, so bring a debit card that allows you to withdraw money internationally. Credit cards are also accepted in many locations, if you need to use one in an emergency. Most places will also accept new-looking US Dollars and give you a very fair exchange rate. It's not recommended to exchange US Dollars for Costa Rican Colones, since you will not receive a good exchange rate.

TRAVEL INFO

Passport and Visa

- 1) Visit the U.S. Department of State's website on traveling within Costa Rica (type "Costa Rica Consular Information Sheet" into a search engine).
- 2) All you need to enter Costa Rica is a valid passport, but make sure it will not expire within 6 months of your arrival back to the U.S.
- 3) Once you've entered Costa Rica, you have a 90-day tourist visa. After 90 days, you must leave the country for 72 hours before returning. Upon return, you have another 90-day tourist visa. You can be a tourist for a long time, as long as you keep renewing the visa every 90 days.

Flights

- 1) The best airport to fly in and out of is Juan Santamaría International Airport, San Jose, Costa Rica (SJO).
- 2) Flights can be easily booked online, and most major airlines fly into the country.
- 3) Check flight dates with Ray before purchasing.

**There's an "exit tax" of \$26 each time you fly out of Costa Rica. Be sure to have cash with you whenever you're planning to leave Costa Rica.*

Transportation in Costa Rica

While you're here, we'll make sure you find transport to all your necessary destinations. If you choose to do some sightseeing before or after the internship, we'll be happy to give you information as to how you can best get around.

Immunizations

Depending upon your doctor, the information you receive about which shots are needed for traveling in Costa Rica will vary significantly. The best advice we can

give interns is to visit the CDC website for traveling in Costa Rica and to arm yourself with the vaccinations you and your family feel are necessary.

We typically recommend that mission team members be up-to-date on their **tetanus** shot and that they receive the **general hepatitis** vaccine.

A few cases of malaria have been reported in the Caribbean Coast region. We will keep you updated on any new developments, but it would be good at least to know where to obtain malaria tablets should that become a recommendation prior to coming to Costa Rica.

Food and Water

For Summer Team Interns, almost all food and water will be provided for you. When you are not with teams, you'll be on your own. The food and water prepared for the teams is safe and American stomach friendly. The only thing you'll need to bring is your own water bottle.

For Full-time Ministry Interns and Methodist School Interns, food and water will often be provided for you, but with much less frequency than it will be for the team interns. There are plenty of good supermarkets to buy food in, and we have never had a problem adjusting to the delicious Costa Rican food.

LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

Summer Team Interns

All Summer Team Interns will have lodging taken care of, as they will be rooming and staying with the American mission teams all summer. Those in the San José area will be staying at the Methodist Seminary in San Pedro*, and those in the Puerto Viejo area will be staying at Hotel El Bambú in the heart of Puerto Viejo (www.elbambu.com).

Full-time Ministry Interns

Full-time Ministry Interns will have the ability to stay at either the Seminary* or the Hotel El Bambú as needed, but will most likely want to find a permanent housing situation. We will do everything we can to help you find a comfortable living situation.

Methodist School Interns

For interns at the Methodist School, there are numerous apartments within shouting distance of the school, and we will help you locate the situation that is best for you.

**The Methodist Seminary's expansion now offers the possibility for teams working at the orphanage and seminary to stay on campus in the community of San Pedro. Presently we have lodging capacity for 50+ persons with the hopes of continuing to expand that number.*

**“For from him and through him and to him are all things.
To him be the glory forever! Amen.”**

Romans 11:36