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Dear Team Leader,
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!

For those who were able to be with us during 2010, we want to thank you for the fabulous work and ministry that you were able to accomplish. All of the churches in the Puerto Viejo/Rio Frio area and the Guapiles/Siquirres region were so blessed by your efforts and we give great thanks for your sharing so extensively with the people of Costa Rica. In addition, a big thanks to all the folks who have helped us get the ball rolling on our Children's Home project in Coronado. We do give our Lord tremendous thanks every time we remember you and all that you have done for the sake of Christ here in Costa Rica. May God richly bless you!

For those churches that will be joining us for the first time in 2011, please know how grateful we are for your partnership with us and how eager we are to work together in sharing the love of Christ with many who do not know Him as well as building up His church in this part of the world.

In an effort to get a jump on 2011's projects, we've updated our "General Info Packet" and hope that you find it useful. **Some critical details have changed** from our previous packet, so please take a few minutes to read through the information thoroughly. Prices on a few things did go up, yet most of the "basics" remain similar to where they were in 2010. Please check out each area though to note a few changes at the Bambu for example. **We ask each team to plan on arriving on a Saturday and departing at the latest the following Saturday from their primary work site lodging location.** (Interns and lodging may or may not be available outside of this time frame)

Additionally, we ask you to please make sure that **each mission team member reads and signs our covenant, and then returns it to you, prior to departing the U.S.** On one hand, we regret that this form is necessary, but it is our desire to ensure that the integrity of Christ is maintained among all who minister in His name. We will **collect the signed covenants from you** at the airport upon your arrival.

It is our continual prayer that every team member will be strengthened in their own personal relationship with Christ through the multiple areas of ministry which they will be involved in while in Costa Rica (*work at the construction site, VBS, worship services with the local churches, and various forms of evangelism and outreach*). In addition, it is our prayer that each team member will 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.

Know that we love you and remember you often before our Lord.
In Christ's name and for His glory,

Ray and Lidia



THE METHODIST CHURCH OF COSTA RICA

Volunteers in Ministry

Outreach Program for 2010

Puerto Viejo – Río Frío – Siquirres Region

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TASKS

WORK PROJECT:
Local Churches in Puerto Viejo, Río Frío, Horquetas and Siquirres

For teams working outside of San José, this year we will focus on three construction/outreach projects.

- 1) The first major focus for the year will be in the La Guaria area (just west of Puerto Viejo). Several years ago the Methodist Church acquired approximately 5 acres of land in the community and has a wonderful long-range plan for ministry/outreach to the people of this community. Plans call for several structures to eventually be built on the land. Teams during 2011 will assist in the completion of the onsite medical clinic, apartment for the local pastor and his family and remodeling the previous worship area.
- 2) The second project will be once again, to work with Pastor José Nunez and the Methodist Church in Siquirres/Pocora where the church continues to grow and share the Good News of Jesus Christ with these communities. Potential work projects include the completion of the kitchen in the Siquirres church and Sunday school rooms in the Pocora church.
- 3) Finally, we hope to finish construction on Sunday school rooms at the Horquetas Methodist Church with the possibility of even initiating a sanctuary for this congregation.

MINISTRY PROJECT:
Vacation Bible School

We will host Vacation Bible Schools **two or three** times during the week. We will work directly with the churches in the Puerto Viejo area and will hold VBS and worship services with them. We will be hosting VBS in a different church everyday; therefore, you are more than welcome to use the same materials for each location.

Plan on having about 85 children at each VBS, even though the number of children that show up can vary from anywhere between 10 and 150. Because it is so difficult to predict how many children will show up each day, bringing materials for 85 children per day should leave you with more than enough materials to make it through the week. The children generally range in age from 3 to 12 years old.

You will have approximately 1 and 1/2 hours for each VBS. This will include:

- singing and dancing (15 minutes),
- prayer time and a Bible lesson (15+ minutes; using skits/dramas, stories, puppets, Q&A time, etc.),
- **two crafts** (25 minutes; this is your opportunity to share one-on-one with the children, so please take advantage of every minute you have with them),
- and games that you bring (20 minutes to play various games, outside activities).

For the singing and dancing, we recommend that you and your team practice songs in Spanish prior to arriving. (If you'd like to sing one song in English that is fine, but as a time of sharing with the children, not to have them learn the song per se) And, if

you'd like and luggage allows, you might even want to consider bringing a musical instrument or two (guitar, small drum, tambourines, etc.) to help create an energetic environment for the children.

For the prayer time and Bible lesson, we suggest that you get as creative as possible to interpret a Bible story for the children. While many of them are familiar with some Bible stories, some of them could be hearing the Word for the first time.

For the two crafts, we've found that it's best for the crafts to relate to the Bible lesson. Granted, it can be a very creative relationship to the lesson, but it usually helps the children to interpret and remember the Bible story they're told. As many of the kids have done the salvation bracelets on a few occasions, we would ask that you plan some other craft besides that one.

And, one random side note: team member nametags are a huge plus, as the children love to call team members by name and focus on the individuals in each group, rather than just see a huge mass of .

Finally, although we know that folks love to pass out as many goodies (candy, toys, etc) as possible to the children as they leave VBS, we would like to respectfully ask that you **plan to hand out at most only one small item for each child at the very end of the VBS time together.** Any other treats, toys etc. that you may have to hand out should be given directly to the pastor and Sunday school teachers, as they will put them to good use throughout the remainder of the year and will distribute them to those in greatest need.

About one month prior to your visit, **please send us an email** with the following information about your VBS plan:

- For the lesson, please include the Scripture passage and basic objective(s) of the lesson.
- For the crafts, please include what materials you'll be using and the overall objective of the craft as well (again, best if it can relate to the lesson!).

This will help us to coordinate the VBS lessons for each church and avoid overlap.
Thanks!

*****Special Note: We plan to have a Spanish-speaking intern present this summer to assist with many projects, including VBS. Yet we still recommend that you please try to bring a Spanish speaker with you, to assist with both VBS and construction at the site.***

ESSENTIALS

**LODGING DURING WORK PROJECTS:
Hotel El Bambú (Puerto Viejo), and Hotel Suerre (Guapiles)**

Hotel El Bambú (Puerto Viejo):

This continues to be the nicest hotel in Puerto Viejo (and really the only option in town where we would consider placing teams.) The rooms have air conditioning, high ceilings, tile floors, and attractive bamboo furniture. It has a large open-air restaurant, a swimming pool, and a rancho behind the pool area—a perfect place to have your morning and evening devotions.

The Bambú now offers two different price ranges for its rooms, depending on the type of accommodations your team would like (pictures can be seen on their website, www.elbambu.com).

For the **new** rooms—at the back of the hotel, all with two double beds—the prices are:

- 1 person: \$50/night
- 2 person: \$80/night
- 3 person: \$90/night
- 4 person: \$120/night

For those desiring to stay in the **older**, yet still very comfortable rooms (with up to 4 beds in a room), the prices will be similar to those in years past:

- 1 person: \$45/night
- 2 person: \$70/night
- 3 person: \$90/night
- 4 person: \$120/night

**All room rates include breakfast and dinner.*

Hotel Suerre (Guapiles):

Due to changes in the previous hotel in Guapiles (Talamanca), we've transferred our teams to the Hotel Suerre. Teams have greatly enjoyed their stay at this hotel, and we are pleased that the hotel management has worked with us, once again, to place teams at its facility.

The prices for 2010 are yet to be confirmed, but they will be close to the 2009 prices:

- 2 person: \$85/night
- 3 person (with 3 beds): \$120/night
- 4 person (with 4 beds): \$135/night

**All room rates include breakfast and dinner.*

**LODGING IN SAN JOSÉ:
Methodist Seminary (San Pedro), and Methodist Center (Alajuela)**

Depending on your flight schedule, you may spend the evening you arrive in the country, or the evening before you leave the country, at either the Methodist Seminary or the Methodist Center, both of which are close to downtown San José. The Seminary is about 25 minutes from the airport while the Center is about 10 minutes from the airport.

All teams that stay at the Seminary are providing a direct ministry to the Methodist Seminary and its students, by helping to pay for its operating costs and for student scholarships.

Costs for lodging/meals at the two locations are as follows:

	Methodist Seminary	Methodist Center
Lodging/night	\$17	\$15
Breakfast	\$ 5	\$ 5
Lunch	\$ 6	\$ 7
Dinner	\$ 7	\$ 8

**All prices are per person*

GROUND TRANSPORTATION

Since all of the worksites and VBS sites (with one exception) are outside of Puerto Viejo, daily transportation will be an essential part of completing the project. And, should an emergency arise and you need to transport someone to the city quickly, your bus will be invaluable.

Daily rates for a bus and driver (this includes gasoline):

- 1 to 10 people, van \$135 per day
- 11 to 22 people, coaster \$185 per day
- 22 to 27 people, passenger bus \$220 per day
- 28 to 33 people, larger passenger bus \$240 per day
- 34+ people, tour bus \$345 per day

**** Special Note: These prices already include a \$20/day charge for driver lodging outside of San José. If you spend a night in San José at either the Methodist Seminary or Center, the bus price will decrease by \$20 for that day.**

In addition, if you are spending the night in San José upon your arrival or departure, it's a \$75 transport fee from the airport to the Methodist Seminary (and vice-versa), and a \$50 transport fee from the airport to the Methodist Center (and vice-versa).

Finally, you will want to give your bus driver a tip at the end of the week, which usually runs from \$175 to \$225.

SUPPLY AND MATERIAL FUNDS

Your donations to our supply/material funds are what keep our work projects afloat. This money is used not only to purchase all the supplies and materials needed to build, but it also pays for the construction workers' salaries. We greatly appreciate your ability to help us in this area of ministry.

For teams of 16 members or more, please send \$ 210 per team member. For teams of 15 members or less, please send a minimum of \$3300 for building supplies/materials.

FOOD AND WATER

Meals

Breakfast and dinner will be served daily at the hotel, and the price of these meals is already included in your room rate.

Lunch at the worksite is prepared by ladies from the church along with your team members. Please budget **\$6 per person, per day**, for lunch while at the worksite. **Please bring these funds with you when you come.**

We also encourage you to line up some kitchen help for each day that you are at the worksite. The ladies from the church will shop and cook daily and individuals from your team will be invited to shop with them and to help them in the kitchen. Most team members really enjoy their mornings in the kitchen (no Spanish necessary).

Water

We will always have plenty of drinking water on hand at the worksite. Budget an additional **\$5 per person, per week**, for bottled water and **please bring these funds with you as well.**

Also, please encourage your team members to **bring a water bottle**, as it makes worksite water consumption a much easier task. And please remind them that hydration is critical on the worksite, as the temperature can rise quickly. They're more than welcome to bring powdered Gatorade / fruit drinks if they so desire.

TEAM INSURANCE

Though we take every precaution possible to prevent on-site accidents, food related illnesses, and other health related problems, **it is of utmost importance that your team is covered by some type of medical insurance policy while in Costa Rica.** (including emergency medical evacuation coverage) The private clinics/hospitals will work with most US insurance companies to collect all necessary materials for reimbursable expenses. Please check to see that either your church's policy covers team members on foreign trips or contact your conference office to purchase a VIM policy for the days you'll be in country.

SCHEDULE

DAILY SCHEDULE

Recognizing that the key word for survival in Costa Rica is “flexibility,” and that the schedule can change according to various needs and factors out of one’s control, a “typical” Monday-Thursday work team day will look something like the following:

7:00 Devotion & Breakfast
8:00 Load up bus
8:15 Arrive at worksite and begin work
11:30 Break for lunch at the church
12:30 Begin work again
3:00 Begin clean up at work site
3:30 Head to VBS (with entire team)
4:00 VBS
5:30 Back to hotel
6:30 Dinner
7:30 Group time, Devotionals, and Free Time (hit the ice cream shop in P.V./Guapiles)

On Sunday, the afternoon schedule is flexible. After church and lunch, you may want to take a tour on the local river for 1 to 2 hours, where often you can see monkeys, birds, crocodiles, etc. It’s a relaxing way to spend the afternoon. Team members are also free to swim in the hotel pool or walk around the town (although most of the shops are closed on Sundays).

Typically, one evening during the week will be spent at a local church worship service, so the regular schedule may need to be revised a bit on that day.

On Friday, you may want to plan on working at the construction site until noon or so, and end your ministry week with lunch and a special time for presenting your gifts of thanks to the constructions workers, the pastors and their wives, and the kitchen help.

MORNING AND EVENING DEVOTIONS

We **strongly** encourage you to have morning and evening devotion time with your team members, we’ve personally seen the tremendous impact and benefit it can have on teams.

One of the best schedules we’ve seen teams use is to give team members time alone in the mornings to read, pray, journal, etc. with perhaps a group time of prayer and singing before heading to the worksite.

Then, in the evening have someone on your team scheduled to lead devotion, also allow time for singing, and a period of time for team members to share where they saw the Lord working that day.

You’ll want to assign someone on the team to be in charge of music for your devotion time. It’s okay to sing, pray, etc. at the Bambu and Suerre hotels.

FREE DAY(S)

Below we have listed several options. Where you go and what you do may largely depend on how much time you have and how much time you want to spend traveling. The earlier you let us know what you are interested in the better. We'll be happy to send you names of hotels, etc. but in most cases will let you make the reservations directly via internet with your credit card, etc. Of course we'll be happy to follow up with those reservations to confirm them, etc.

Full Day/Overnight Trips

1. Arenal Volcano (active), Río Fortuna Waterfall, and hot springs
2. Pacific Ocean -- beach resorts
3. Whitewater rafting
4. Cloud forest, for bird watching
5. Snorkeling in the Pacific or the Caribbean
6. Boat ride to Tortuga Island
7. Sport fishing

Half Day Trips

1. Aerial Tram tour through rainforest
2. Canopy tour (zip-line) through rainforest
3. Irazu Volcano (non-active)
4. Butterfly farm
5. Coffee plantation tour
6. Waterfall tour

Tours around Puerto Viejo

1. Flat-bottom boat trip down Sarapiquí River
2. Whitewater rafting down Sarapiquí River
2. Canopy tour (zip-line)
3. Walk through the rain forest
4. Banana plantation tour
5. Pineapple plantation tour
6. Day trip to the hot springs/volcano in La Fortuna

TEAM

CLOTHING / DRESS

Worksite

While at the worksite, remember that you'll be working in dirt, with concrete, around rebar, and with big tools.

We recommend that you wear a t-shirt or work shirt, long pants, sturdy close-toed shoes, and a hat. Work gloves and a bandana would also prove invaluable.

We do allow **long** shorts; however, **please refrain from wearing tank tops or sleeveless shirts**, or shirts with their shirttails cut off of them, as these are not in good taste by Costa Rican standards.

Also, teams typically leave straight from the worksite to do VBS at the churches. Team members will need to bring a fresh shirt or a change of clothes before heading to VBS.

Church

When attending church services, we recommend a nice shirt and khakis/slacks for the guys, and skirts or dresses for the girls (although pants, crop pants, and capris are also acceptable).

Free day(s)

While it's up to your team members to decide how they're most comfortable away from the worksite, we recommend sturdy shoes or strapped-sandals for any outdoor activities and a light jacket for any teams who will be traveling in the mountains. And modest dress is always appreciated.

IMMUNIZATIONS

Depending upon your doctor, the information you receive about what shots are needed while visiting in Costa Rica will vary significantly.

We typically recommend that team members be up-to-date on their **tetanus** shot and that they receive the **general hepatitis** vaccine. However, the best advice we can give you is to do what is necessary to make your team members feel comfortable while they are here.

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.

MONEY

TEAM GIFT-GIVING

On the last day of work, or after VBS, the mission teams usually bring thank you gifts for the construction workers, kitchen helpers, pastors, and VBS helpers (\$10 or less/gift).

The type of gift you bring is totally up to you. The Costa Ricans always enjoy receiving something unique from your church, city or state. A team t-shirt is more than an adequate example! We usually have three women helping in the kitchen, three or four men from the church working at the site, and two pastors.

*****Special note: Beyond these team gifts which, again, can be shared on the last day of work or after VBS (not during worship services), any other sharing of gifts/money, etc. with other members of the community/church is strongly discouraged, and we ask that you refrain from doing so.***

If you, or another other individuals from your team, would like to contribute to the local congregation, offerings are collected in each church worship service. If you perceive another particular need, Ray and Lidia can assist you in directing funds in an appropriate manner.

PAYMENT INFORMATION

Wire Transfer

Please send all hotel, transportation, and supply/material funds to the church's account via wire transfer.

We will send you an email with the final payment due for your mission team at least 6 weeks prior to your arrival date in Costa Rica (all costs included in this packet are for your general knowledge and budgeting purposes, they are not 100% final). **Please do not send any funds until you receive this final "payment due" amount from us.**

****Critical:*** To help our ministry run smoothly, **please be prepared to send us your deposit 5 weeks in advance. Once you have received the final "payment due" notice from Costa Rica and you're prepared to wire your payment, please send us an email on the same day that you wire the money, telling us the amount you've deposited, so that we can correctly account for your money in the church's bank account (we receive **NO** notification in the bank statements of *who* has deposited money).**

Here's the information you'll need for the wire transfer: (Please note this is a new account from 2010 wiring instructions)

Bank Name: Banco Nacional de Costa Rica
SWIFT: BNCRCRSJ

Account # for US\$: 200—02—148—004083--1

Name on Account: Grupo en Mision

Church Address: Iglesia Evangelica Metodista
Centro Juan Wesley
De Burger King, 100 metros este, 150 sur
San Juan de Tibas
San José, Costa Rica
Central America

Church Telephone: 506-2-236-2171

Some banks in the States require a physical address to which they are sending the funds.

Address: Banco Nacional de Costa Rica
Avenida 1, Calles 2 y 4
San José, Costa Rica
Central America

Telephone: 506-2-212-2000

OTHER TIDBITS

Cash is Best

All money that you bring into Costa Rica should be in the form of **cash**, US\$. Traveler's checks are not widely accepted and credit card fees down here can put a significant dent in your pocket.

You can use an American debit card to withdraw cash at almost every ATM in Costa Rica, if you don't feel safe bringing large amounts of cash with your team. You'll need cash to pay for your lunch and water money, drivers' tips, and your exit taxes.

Exit Taxes

When leaving the country you will need to pay an exit tax of **\$26 per person**. This can be paid in U.S. dollars.

COVENANT

THE COVENANT

Whether this is your first or 15th time to minister with us in Costa Rica, **we want each of your team members to sign a covenant**, and for you - the team leader, to bring these signed covenants with you to Costa Rica. We will receive the covenants **from you** at the airport!

A copy of the covenant is attached. While in Costa Rica, you and your team members are guests of the Methodist Church. Everywhere you go (hotels, worksites, churches, beach resorts, restaurants, any other free day locations, etc.) and whatever you do, will be a direct reflection on the Methodist Church and its ministry.

For this reason, we ask that you please respect the Methodist Church of Costa Rica's standards and practices while in the country. By not doing so, you send "mixed messages" to those with whom you have direct and/or indirect contact. We recognize that there are multiple forms of ministry and opportunities to serve in missions; therefore, if one of your team members feels he/she is unable to commit to the covenant, we would suggest that you encourage him/her to consider another place of service at this time.



THE METHODIST CHURCH OF COSTA RICA
Mission Trip Covenant 2011

Church Name _____

Team Leader _____ Dates of Trip _____

Your Name _____

If under 18, your parent's name _____

I, _____, realize the following commitment is crucial to the effectiveness, quality, and positive expression of our mission together. As a participating member of this mission trip, I agree to:

- Share the love of Jesus Christ in ways that make a Christian difference,
- Lift up Jesus Christ with my thoughts, words, and actions,
- Pray for and support my team leader and his/her decisions,
- Abstain from offering personal gifts or money to individuals in the community/church without the consent of local missionary leaders,
- Abstain from the use of all alcohol, tobacco, illegal drugs, offensive clothing, and profanity; from the time of my departure with the team until I return home (this includes fun days!),
- Accept the ministry that is going on in the area where I am serving as well as the native approach to the mission, though it may differ from my approach,
- Respect the host's view of Christianity, because I understand that Christianity has various expressions throughout the world,
- Remember the missionary is to learn and serve, not to teach and boss. I'll resist the temptation to inform our hosts about how I normally do things,
- Develop and maintain a servant attitude toward the people we serve as well as toward each team member, because I am a servant of Jesus Christ called to be in ministry with the host church,
- Serve as best I can so that both the purpose and the task of the mission will be accomplished,
- Refrain from negativism and complaining. Travel and ministry outside my church may present unexpected and even undesired circumstances. However, my support and creativity will enhance the moment while complaining and negativism will destroy the moment,
- Refrain from gossip. If it is not true, good, and positive, I will not say it, and
- Remember the 3 Cs: No complaining. No criticizing. No comparing.

Signature

Date

If under 18, your parent's signature