

# REACH MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL



*Team Member Manual*

# WARNING:

## What you are about to experience could revolutionize your life!

You are to be commended for applying to go on a short-term missions trip. You may not think you will ever be a missionary, a preacher, or whatever. You may not even think you have a lot to give, but you have presented yourself to the Lord for His use. You are "going out on a limb"...trusting the Lord for hundreds of dollars...expressing your willingness to work and to sweat. And that isn't all. Perhaps this will be your first time out of the country.

**Well, fasten your seat belt.**

The Bible tells us God is able to do "exceeding abundantly above all we can ask or think." Trust Him to provide the finances. Trust Him to be your strength and help. Trust Him to give you stamina in the weather. Trust Him to enable you to love as Christ loved. Trust Him to make this trip more than a cross-cultural education. Trust Him to bless this venture so that it revolutionizes your life.



### REACH MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL (RMI)

Rev. William Parks and his wife, Joyce, have been involved in ministry for over 30 years. They have traveled across the United States and in many Latin American countries.

In the early nineties, while in Texas, God used a series of events to turn their eyes to the open door of ministry in Mexico. At the close of a ministry engagement in a church in Laredo, a pastor friend took Bill across the Tex-Mex border to visit some squatter camps. The poverty and spiritual need of the people there gripped him. Bill left Mexico that day with empty pockets, a frustration that he could not do more, and a determination to return and make a difference.

Feeling led by God, Bill made a bold statement that he would indeed return to Mexico. However, that resolution did not go unchallenged. Difficulties and trials ensued, but instead of deterring the Parks from the vision, these challenges only served as confirmation that what they had set out to do was indeed the plan of the Lord.

In the past two decade, Bill has returned to Mexico...and returned...and returned again. Unlike the first time, he hasn't gone with pocket change and a few dollar bills. Instead, he has taken hundreds of Christians--lay people and pastors --from across the United States, carrying not only material provisions such as food and clothing but, most importantly, the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Thousands have prayed to receive Christ. Lives have been changed. Churches have been planted.

## And the ministry goes on...

RMI outreaches have expanded to other parts of Mexico and now other Spanish-speaking countries such as Guatemala, Honduras, Colombia, Venezuela, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and even Cuba.

## YOU



Here you are. Just another team member? Just another person on a plane flying south to hand out beans and rice? No! "For such a time as this" you are joining the ranks of hundreds of others because the Lord has a specific purpose. RMI believes the Lord has given gifts and talents to each member of the body of Christ. You will be encouraged to use these gifts on your trip. And remember... each time you share, sing a song, manipulate a puppet, give a child a piece of candy, give a mother food for her household, hand out gospel literature to a man on the street, or lay your hands on the sick and pray for their healing... you do it in Jesus' name!

Thank you for applying to be a RMI team member!

## PREPARE YOURSELF

This missions trip will be a special experience. However, there are certain things you will need to do to adequately prepare for what lies ahead:

- **READ** this manual thoroughly.
- **COMPLETE** and return all the necessary paperwork.
- **PRAY** for the people to whom you are being sent, that God will use you to touch their hearts and bless their lives.

All required forms must be completed, signed, and sent to RMI, and the cost of the trip paid in full prior to departure from home.

# RULES



Bill Parks, or a designated representative of RMI, will be the final authority in all matters related to the trip. This does not mean there is no flexibility or consulting with the ministry team, but simply that the group leader shall be the

decision-maker when necessary.

Proper conduct at all times is of utmost importance, and full cooperation is needed from each team member. We are ambassadors for Christ.

Proper dress is essential and will be as follows:

## LADIES:

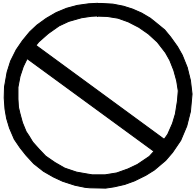
- ◆ For church services and other formal times of ministry, skirts or dresses will be considered proper.
- ◆ Slacks/jeans and T-shirts are acceptable for outdoor outreach and work times.
- ◆ Shorts and T-shirts with suitable writing can be worn during leisure times only.
- ◆ Bathing suits are to be one-piece and modest.
- ◆ Please leave expensive clothing and jewelry at home. RMI is not responsible for lost or stolen valuables. Furthermore, the people to whom we will minister, will generally be very poor.
- ◆ One dress outfit for Sunday services should be sufficient.

## MEN:

- ◆ For church services and other formal times of ministry, slacks and shirts with collars shall be considered proper.
- ◆ Jeans and T-shirts may be worn for outdoor outreach and work times.
- ◆ Shorts, tank tops, or T-shirts with writing can be worn in leisure time only.
- ◆ Suits are not necessary. One dress outfit for Sunday church services should be sufficient.



Vehicles must be treated with respect. All trash should be disposed of properly after each use. There is to be no gum-chewing in the vehicles or during ministry. (Extreme heat and gum combines to make a gooey mess!)



Smoking, drinking, use of non-prescription drugs, and improper conduct are prohibited. Violators will be sent home at their own expense.

There will be no romantic physical contact by unmarried members of the opposite sex with other team members, nationals, or other helpers. This includes holding hands. This is a missions trip and all focus should be on the ministry at hand.

No one is permitted to wander from the group at any time without the express permission of their team leader.

Minors will be assigned to an adult team member who will stay in the same hotel room and to whom they will be accountable at all times. When in-room time has been declared, team members are expected to remain in their hotel rooms. This is of utmost importance for security reasons and adequate rest.

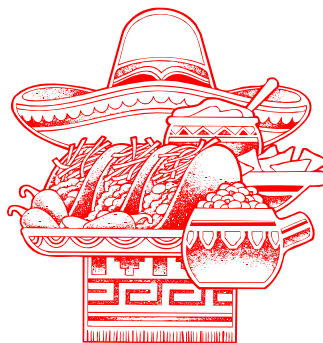
Each team member is required to attend daily morning devotions and prayer time and arrive at the designated location on time. Punctuality is a must! (Those who are late are asked to sing a solo in Spanish.)

Some team members will be asked to provide a devotional on a given day, and other responsibilities will be assigned at the orientation.

According to I Corinthians 12:4,11; Romans 12:6-10; and Ephesians 4:8; God clearly gives differing gifts to each of us. These gifts should be freely exercised by each team member. Please inform team leaders of the talents you have which can be used.

Each team member should be prepared to share a testimony of his/her personal relationship with Christ at least once during the trip.

During ministry outreaches, no one should be inside the ministry trucks except leaders, puppeteers (during actual puppet ministry), and those operating the sound system. The truck quickly becomes crowded when extra people are inside.



## TO BRING CHECKLIST

- Bible
- Spanish-English dictionary
- This RMI Team Member Manual
- Birth certificate, voter registration card, OR passport for Mexico. All other countries require a passport.
- Medications - must be stated on health form
- Motion sickness medicine for air travelers
- Hats or umbrellas - for shade in very hot sun
- Sunscreen and sunglasses - very important
- Skin moisturizers
- Personal toiletries
- Inexpensive camera, film, & batteries
- Bathing suit and pool towel
- Insect repellent
- Clothes for ministry/outreach. Clothes for leisure. One dress outfit for Sunday.
- Personal spending money - Check brochure to see if your trip includes meals or not. If meals are not included, plan on spending about \$15 a day for food.
- A **voluntary** offering for the host missionary. Suggestion: \$50 per team member. On our Mexico trips, an additional \$50 is suggested, to be used to purchase rice and beans for distribution to the poor in conjunction with the outreach ministry.
- If you'd like, bring a bag or two of candy. We hand out lots of candy to the children. Candies purchased should be bite-size, individually wrapped, hard, and not chocolate or meltable.
- Each church group traveling to Mexico should consider purchasing Bibles and follow-up materials to be distributed to those who respond to the invitation to receive Christ.
- Most trips require an entrance fee or an exit fee by the country hosting us. The cost usually about \$25.00.



## CULTURAL CUES

Ethnocentrism--it's a big word...and sometimes, it's a big hindrance to ministry. Ethnocentrism is the attitude that "my culture" is better than everyone else's. Yes, we go to share the Gospel, but there is much for us to learn. For example, Latin American people are much more relationship or people-oriented; our North American culture is time-oriented. As the saying goes, look before you leap. Listen. Watch. Pay close attention. Be sensitive to what is happening around you. When you can not understand the language, it takes an extra measure of patience.



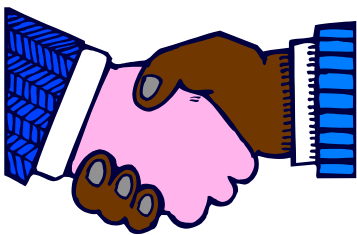
## IN CHURCH

Latin American Christians, for the most part, have great respect for the church building and during services, etc. It is important we are aware of this and avoid offending the very people to whom we have come to minister! Enter church services with a sense of reverence. Latin Americans demonstrate they have come to church to meet with God. Each person generally locates a seat and then kneels--either at his seat or at the altar--to first spend time talking to God. Pre-service time is usually a quiet time, not a social time as is often the case in the USA.

The altar is a special place where people meet with God. Never sit on it. When approaching the platform, use the steps instead of stepping over the rail or altar. If there are no steps, try to use the sides of the altar.

NEVER bring food and beverages into the sanctuary.

The Bible should also be handled with respect. Latin Americans hold their Bibles or place on the seat. Never lay yours on the floor, toss it around, step on it, or jokingly tap/hit your friends with it.



Greet the people and be friendly. Latin Americans are very warm and hospitable. Do not be afraid to practice your Spanish greetings. At least learn how to say, "God bless you." Your attempts--even if you make a mistake--will mean so much to them. **Do not just walk past people in the church; stop and greet them.** A smile goes far! Latin American ladies often give each other a light kiss on the cheek.

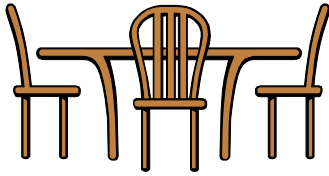
## MINISTRY AND OUTREACH TIMES

Never chew gum during ministry, even at an outdoor outreach. (One summer a team member was playing the part of Jesus in a play, and chewed gum the whole time. Jesus was beaten, crucified, and lay dead all the while chewing gum. He was then resurrected, gum and all!)

Sunglasses are necessary in the bright sun. However, it is best to remove them when publicly sharing a testimony or taking part in a drama. Also, take them off when praying for people. With the language barrier, eye contact is valuable. Let people see your eyes.

## AROUND THE TABLE

If a special meal is prepared for the team in someone's home, always do your best to enjoy it. Be careful--facial expressions are closely watched when there is a language barrier. Always thank the hostess/host. When a family prepares a meal for the team, it is often a great sacrifice, and we need to be appreciative!



## TO DO CHECKLIST

After you have submitted your trip application form:

- ① Give your pastor a copy of the pastor's reference form to complete and mail to RMI.
- ② Complete and mail your health form to RMI
- ③ Countries other than Mexico: Get your passport!
- ④ If you are under 18 years of age, have your parents sign the parental consent form in duplicate, and **before a notary public**. One will be sent to RMI prior to the trip and the other should be on your person from the time you leave home.(This is an absolute requirement!)
- ⑤ If you are 18 or older, sign and return the liability release form.
- ⑥ Pay the balance of the trip cost by the designated date. (Refer to the RMI brochure or contact the RMI office for this information.)
- ⑦ Pack your suitcase and pray that God will touch you as you reach out and touch others.
- ⑧ Practice your Spanish at home, you will be glad you did.

