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50 Years of Short-Term Journeys



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International Ministries started to officially send volunteers on short-term missions in the late 1960's. A lot has happened since then. There have been some office changes, staff changes, name changes; from Volunteers, Special Service Workers, to Volunteers in Global

Missions to Short-Term and Extended Short-Term Volunteers and Servants. The office has been referred to as VIGM in the early years to currently being STM.

The purpose has stayed the same; “provide cross-cultural global short-term mission opportunities to ABC regions, churches, individuals desiring to serve alongside long-term global servants and/or partners.” The volunteers registered with the office have grown from ten people a year to 1,000 a year. There have been accidents, medical emergencies, repatriations and deaths on the mission field over the years. We are grateful that for fifty years, the special medical evacuation and repatriation insurance has been present as a strong safety net for volunteers and staff to manage the various emergencies. Pre-trip orientation sessions using “Going with God” manual is a tool the STM team uses to prepare volunteers before they leave the US. Various articles, videos (When helping hurts), books (God so Loves the City, Revolution in World Missions, Exploring World Mission, Mission Matters).

The countries that have received the most volunteers for these past fifty years have remained: Haiti, Zaire, Congo, Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Thailand. Volunteers have been single men, women, couples, families, grandparents, retirees, church groups, pastors from multi regions, college students, youth teams, ABC and non ABC teams with a desire to be the hands and feet of Christ.

Today, the current STM Team extends hands of gratitude to the thousands of men and women who have traveled out of their comfort zones, to be the hands and feet of Christ in unfamiliar cultural settings. Thank you for opening your hearts, ears and eyes to being taught by others who may and may not have looked like you. Thank you to all who have transformed family vacations into short-term missions representing IM near and far. Thank you for “showing up” in the name of Mercy, Hope and Love.

Where might God take us in the next fifty years, from 2019 ~~~ to 2069?... We lift this question in prayer and we know with assurance that we will aim to be the Christians we have been called to be 24/7 and not just on Sunday mornings.

