

Nicaragua Mission Trip Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

What's a mission trip to Nicaragua all about?

Simply put, the 'mission' is most importantly about the relationships you will form with the people and with the communities you visit. DUMC has a sister relationship with the community of La Danta, a very rural, impoverished, farming community in Northwest Nicaragua not far from the Honduras border. A delegation trip will focus on building and deepening the relationship between our communities and making new friends with others whose reality is very different than our own. We will spend several days as guests of our friends in La Danta sharing their modest homes and experiencing life in their community. We'll spend time together in various activities, talking, laughing and worshipping together. We will talk about our struggles, and we'll identify ways we can work together to improve our lives. It's one thing to hear that extreme poverty exists in the world, and that many people live on less than two dollars a day, but it's so much more powerful and impactful to actually experience that reality.



Will we work on a project while we're in La Danta?

Maybe...in the recent past delegation members have worked with the community to design and build a new church building and a new community playground. Past delegations have also planned and led bible schools and healing services.

There is always a theme of empowerment and a focus of working together with the residents in La Danta to identify ways that we can mutually implement sustainable change. We know that when communities in both North America and Central America work together, we are stronger and more effective and capable of making a greater impact. When we work together in sincere, caring and honest relationships, we can improve lives and create a better world. We also find that we, as visitors, gain and learn as much as those with whom we are visiting.

What else will we do during the mission trip?

We may spend some time learning about Nicaraguan history and culture; meeting with sweatshop employees in Managua seeking to understand the working conditions in their factories; visiting a local orphanage, fair trade producers, a local farm or coffee plantation or shopping at a local market. We may also spend some time relaxing at the beach, going to a fresh water lagoon, zip lining or touring an active volcano. Delegation members can recommend the activities that most interest them. All the delegation activities help us to better understand and be more aware of social justice (or injustice) issues in our world.

Will we really see and experience poverty and social injustice?

Absolutely! To live side by side with the poor and accompany them in their daily reality can be a powerful eye opening experience. During



the trip there will be regularly planned time for delegation members get together to reflect and share their observations, thoughts, experiences, and feelings. In the end we may learn to be better global

citizens by walking Christ's walk with the people and communities we visit. We may find that there is more we can do for those suffering from poverty - and we may also learn that the poor have something to offer us as well.

So then it's about more than building a relationship or working on a project, right?

Definitely! It's about understanding the reality that others are living and realizing that many people don't live the way we do and don't have the same opportunities we have.

It's about breaking down stereotypes or prejudices on both sides, and maybe learning to see ourselves with new eyes.

It's about seeing that those who have very little often have a deep faith and live in strong, caring communities; and conversely wondering why those who have so much more don't have those same things.



It's about conveying to others that they are important, someone cares, and they matter.

It's about building hope.....and it's about making a difference.

Are there tour guides?

Sort of. The mission trip will be coordinated and led from start to finish by the Between Cultures (aka Entre Culturas) mission team located in Nicaragua, and with local roots (our very own Stan, Kathy, and Amanda Jones and their extended Nicaraguan family!). Between Cultures is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to accompanying



sister community relationships between rural Christian Base Communities in Nicaragua and committed communities of churches and universities in the United States. Team members will plan and create a meaningful delegation experience involving all in-country travel, hotel stays, dining, activities, meetings, and more led and coordinated by Between Cultures team members.

What do I bring on the mission trip?

There will be several meetings in the months leading up to the trip to answer all your questions and plan for the trip. You'll receive a recommended packing list and information on international vaccinations recommended by the CDC. Trip insurance is provided by Volunteers in Mission. You will need a current passport.

Is it safe in Nicaragua?

Nicaragua today is a safe and peaceful country. It is known as the land of lakes and volcanoes and the Nicaraguan people welcome travellers from North America, Europe or other parts of the world with open arms. While Nicaragua is one of the poorest countries in Central America, as far as crime goes, Nicaragua is one of the safest countries in Central America. Rest assured that the Between Cultures team's priorities are your health and safety!



Do I have to know how to speak Spanish?

No, there will be several translators travelling with the delegation at all times to interpret during group activities and also assist you with individual conversations. You can always bring along a Spanish/English dictionary if you want to try conversing a little on your own. Your Nicaraguan friends will appreciate your effort.

How much does it cost?

The trip cost is approximately \$1,200, which covers everything, including airfare, all meals, bottled water, lodging, transportation, and all activities. Various payment options are available and some funds from various fundraisers are available to help defray costs if needed. Cost should never be a barrier to participating. You may want to bring along a small amount of money for snacks and souvenirs.

Where can I get more information?

For more information on the Nicaragua Mission Program please contact Kathy Jones at kathyjones@mrisc.com or Mike Wahl at wahlm50@msn.com.

For more information on Between Cultures please check out www.facebook.com/betweencultures