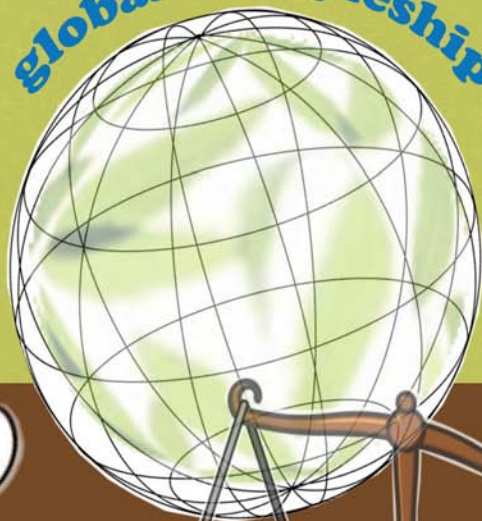




A Mission Trip Preparation Guide for  
Students and Young Adults,  
based on the Presbyterian Church's call for  
"Just Globalization"

**Just**

**global discipleship**



The real price of cheap flip-flops ...  
the vision of "Avatar" ... and other  
insights to view your Mission as  
more than **just** a helping hand.



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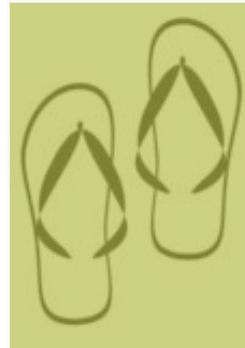
## Taking a Walk on the Flip Side: It's Not **Just** Globalization!

We take for granted that we can be in touch with someone anywhere in the world in seconds. Or, that the customer service rep answering our computer question may be more than halfway around the world. The lines of business are international, and by extension, so are each of us. Try playing "3 degrees of separation": Start with any product in your house, or "Google" any category, and see how quickly you can link to at least 3 other countries. It's pretty easy, isn't it? Welcome to "globalization," the interconnected world in which we live.

Although we may be 3 links away, the real degrees of separation may be much, much greater. It may be more like 30, or 300, or 3,000 when one considers the relative standard of living of the peoples and cultures in our network, and in our shared market economy.

It has been said that you can tell a lot about the peoples you visit by looking at their feet. So, let's take the humble flip-flop, for example: If you live in a "developed" country like the United States, basic rubber flip-flops are optional and seasonal footwear. They come in bright colors and are so inexpensive that most of us have more than one pair. If the toe-hold breaks or the flip-flops get too worn and dirty, we just throw them away to sit in a landfill forever.

Now, consider the flip side: Those cheap flip-flops are affordable and plentiful because somewhere in the world a manufacturer has found how to make them that way. How? Cheap labor (how does \$1 a day sound?), in a "developing" country, where flip-flops may be a luxury because the alternative is bare feet. Jobs at any wage may be scarce, so worker exploitation is easy (\$1 a day is better than nothing). Cheap cost of goods, with no regard for recycled materials, sustainability or the harmful emissions pouring into the air ... and suddenly, they're not **just** flip-flops!



In the Church's eyes, it is also not **Just** globalization.

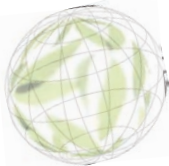
Of course, "**just**" in the sense of "justice and fairness" is the word meant in this context. But "**just**" in the sense of "simple and minimal" underscores the message, too. As you open your heart and your eyes during your mission trip, you may learn that simple, everyday things like flip-flops are a way to see the sometimes complicated difference between usual-for-profit globalization, and **Just** Globalization. **Just** globalization aims to find a fair and faithful balance in the key components of God's household: economics, ecology and ecumenical understanding, now and into the future.

## About This Booklet

Whether it's your first mission trip outside the United States, or your fifth, you have choices about how you witness, and how you understand the realities of what you encounter. Witness with compassion and wisdom, and you will receive (spiritual) gifts from even the poorest people in the most destitute places. Witness with awareness of the "flip" side—the long-term goals and the short-term concerns of **Just Globalization**—and you will bring back a personal experience that may **just** change the world!

This is a very brief introduction to globalization—the economic, cultural and spiritual bonds and connections that bring new opportunities, but may mean bondage in many places of great inequality, like the places where your mission work will take you. It is written to encourage a Christian response to globalization, but that also requires seeing and naming things we do not believe in: oppression, grinding inequality, the destruction of nature and human relationships, and more.

You will find ideas on what to look for, what to ask about, and what to pray for, as you understand more about power and powerlessness. We sometimes see things more clearly when we step out of our own culture. The more an attitude is part of our everyday "wallpaper," the less likely it is to get our attention. Stepping out to see the impacts of consumerism, militarism and celebrity worship (for instance) both here and overseas may bring surprising insights—What we claim to "value" and how other cultures look at what our values seem to be may be two different things. (Another flip side!)



God's Household: *Oikoumene* in Greek, from which we coincidentally get the words, "economics," "ecology," and "ecumenical," all three of which must be balanced and fair in a just world.



As you go on a mission trip, you have choices about what you want to stand for—going out and coming back—and you have more power than you know. Mission is not **just** to build things or to teach subjects, but also to share power with compassion, and learn something of weakness on all sides. We are called to "bear each other's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."

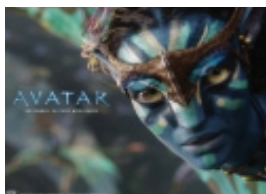
Thus, mission is relational:

- Relating what you see and feel to your own life;
- Relating to the people and the circumstances you find on your mission walk; and
- Relating what you experience to the bigger picture of globalization, and how it is changing our world.

Paul spoke of God's power being "made perfect in my weakness." As you share and see real life obstacles, yes, you may feel tired, weak and helpless to truly change the world. But you will lift up the lives of those who need it, and lift up God's household (see sidebar) with the perspective you bring back. It's **just** that simple!

Enjoy this movie together  
as a team-building event  
before your trip!

## THE VISION OF AVATAR



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In this award-winning movie Jake is sent on a mission to infiltrate Pandora in order to oppress its people and plunder its natural resources. As he (literally) learns to see through their eyes, and see with his heart, he becomes a champion and savior for them. What are the parallels between the story of Jesus' life and the story of Jake, after his "conversion"? What parallels can you make between your call to mission and theirs?

## SHARING YOUR VISION

Start a Facebook page for your trip or join with others in the Mission Crossroads network\* to get connected as you prepare, and stay connected after you return.

Use your own Facebook page, blog, Mission Crossroads or Twitter accounts to share your "sound bites" and photos with those at home. It's an easy way to keep a journal of your feelings and observations every day.

\*Join Mission Crossroads ([www.pcusa.org/missioncrossroads](http://www.pcusa.org/missioncrossroads)) as an individual or as a group to blog, listen to monthly podcasts and Webinars, read about other's experiences, post your own news, and be part of this "God's Mission Matters" interactive community!

Find other information and links at [www.pcusa.org/missiontrips](http://www.pcusa.org/missiontrips).

**Take photos to illustrate some of these points!**

**Capture similarities and differences.**

**But remember to be respectful of any people you photograph; you may want to ask their permission first.**



## A CHRISTIAN VISION

As Christians we have a sense of the bigger picture based in God's creative and redemptive purposes. To quote from the Globalization policy:

*Almost everyone now is familiar with the power of the world market system; yet the Christian tradition speaks of the whole earth as God's household—the oikoumene—from the same New Testament Greek word from which we get economics, ecology and ecumenical...The biblical vision begins with...one God creating one humanity, and includes God's redeeming work in Christ reconciling across divisions; between us and God, and among human beings. Martin Luther King Jr.'s image of a "world house" was his version of the Bible's vision of a world made new and at peace. We believe that the vision and values of the "world house" are more encompassing than those of the "world market," and we also remember Jesus' warning that "no city or house divided against itself will stand" (Matt.12:25)...*

See [www.pcusa.org/oga/publications/resolution-on-just-globalization.pdf](http://www.pcusa.org/oga/publications/resolution-on-just-globalization.pdf)

## QUESTIONS BEFORE YOU GO:

These questions may be asked of you by your trip leader, for group sharing or personal reflection. As with all the questions in this booklet, there are no right and wrong answers, but you may notice the Holy Spirit at work as you put your sense of “being called” or “sent” into words.

The word “mission” comes from the Latin word, “missio,” meaning “to send.”

1. Why do you want to participate in this mission trip?  
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2. How has the purpose of the trip been described?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. How have the people with whom you will be working been described?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. How does this mission trip fit into the life of your congregation and/or your community?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What do you hope to bring home/learn from the trip?  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. What do you hope to share when you are there?  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. What do you hope to leave there?  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Have you researched the history, culture and religion(s) of the area you will visit? (What have you learned?)  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. What do you expect will be the biggest differences or adjustments for you, based on what you know so far?  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. Is there anything that you are not looking forward to? If so, what are your specific concerns?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## TUNING INTO “GLOBALIZATION” DURING THE TRIP:

1. As you land in the airport, you may see a mix of familiar products and brand names plus many that you’ve never seen before. Look at vending areas, beverage, clothing or shoe brands, movie posters, etc. List 10 that seem to be the most common, and “\*” any of these you know from the United States. (This may be how others know us!)

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Now \*\* any that seem to be from the country you are visiting.

## **TUNING INTO “GLOBALIZATION” DURING THE TRIP (continued):**

2. As you leave the airport, observe the vehicles, building materials, housing styles and shopping areas. Try to come up with contrasts between the airport area and the outer areas as you travel to your site (e.g., from paved road to dirt roads). Think of contrasts between home and here.
3. Observe the “big picture” of life here. Do you see: Damage from human or natural disasters? Evidence of government action or security enforcements? Signs of poverty or homelessness? Signs of industrial or technological development? (Do any of these relate to your mission?)
4. What is the quality of life like compared to yours? How are things we usually take for granted in the United States the same, or different?
  - How are men and women treated? Can women do manual labor outside the home? Are there dress codes that are observed, and are they voluntary or “required”?
  - Are children and teens at school for most of the day, or not? It may be difficult to match your work schedule to talk to young adults, but if you get the opportunity “discover” at least one person’s story. Ask about their hopes and dreams for the future. Do they feel optimistic, or limited? Will they stay there, or emigrate? What kinds of jobs do they want? What do they do for fun? Do they have things like cell phones and computers? How is their life better, or not, than that of their parents’ generation? (Be aware that some may not feel they can talk openly about these things. Why?)
  - What are the daily problems? Are healthy food and clean water easy to come by, or not? Are medical care and transportation available? Is employment common, or are jobs scarce? Are there sanitation services for garbage and recycling? Is crime or drug trafficking a concern? (Are these long-term problems, or have they become worse because of recent circumstances?)
  - Does it seem that most people are at the same economic level, or do some seem to have much less than others? At the other extreme, is there evidence of a smaller group that is clearly at the top of the economic scale, and a very big group of people at the bottom? What is the difference between the “haves” and the “have nots”?
5. Does it feel like a culture of war, or of peace? Is military service required of young adults? Is there a history of war in the area? If so, was it a war of independence ... a revolution against oppression such as slavery, civil war, invasion ... a religious or ideological split? How may attitudes and social patterns be affected by this past violence? Is there evidence of tension between different groups?
6. How do people worship? What are other signs of spirituality that you see? Do the people have different belief systems? Would you describe them as people of faith and hope, or of despair and disillusionment?

7. Personal reflection: What are the hardest things to accept about all that you have seen or heard? What has impressed you most about the people you have seen or met?

Use these as starting points for ideas on quick “sound bites” and photo-ops! Tweet, text, send captioned photos to Facebook or Mission Crossroads...try journaling or blogging...as a record of the trip.

### QUESTIONS FOR WHEN YOU RETURN:

1. How were your expectations met?
2. What hopes do you have for the people and community you served?
3. What frustrations did you find yourself having? What are some frustrations you now feel? (Reverse culture shock?)
4. What were the most “culturally insensitive” moments on your trip? (How were they overcome?)
5. What were some of the “breakthrough” moments? How was God involved in them? What kind of “transformation” took place?
6. How well do you think you empathized with those you served? Were you able to walk in their shoes, and see the world their way, or not?
7. In the bigger picture, where would the community you served fall on a scale of one to ten, from powerless to powerful?
8. Did you share information to stay in touch? (Do you think you will?)
9. Will you go back, or on another mission trip?
10. How are you going to share learning (and pictures!) from your trip with your home community?
11. Can you see yourself having been an “ambassador for Christ,” engaged in a “ministry of reconciliation”?

### Stories Collide:

Ask a Somali fisherman about that common proverb, “Give a man a fish, and he will be hungry tomorrow; teach a person to fish and he will be able to feed himself.”

He might point out the big commercial fishing vessels on the horizon that have depleted fish stocks and ruined his fishing, whether he fished for a living or just to feed his own family. To him, it is not **Just** Globalization.

Nor is it **just** in the eyes of a farmer whose land has been turned over to commercial production but who can't afford to purchase the required seeds to be a supplier...Or, to a new factory worker who likes a good job near her home, but has watched her children sicken from the village's now-contaminated water supply. (And was the factory relocated from somewhere else? What happened there?)

These are dramatic examples, but globalization means that almost every country has new forces shaping its horizon, when an industry or technology “booms,” each country wants to be part of it, but many individuals will struggle to gain a secure foothold amid the change. For each person who is able to move up to the middle class, two more may slip below the poverty line.

In a globalized world, the scales of justice seem often out of balance.

## Going deeper: Toward a Global Citizenship

The Church's voice in these situations has been crucial in proclaiming rights for everyone, through self-determination of peoples based on democratic values. The Presbyterian and Reformed tradition has been particularly influential, given the emphasis on individual conscience, decisions by councils, and public accountability of those in power. Ultimately, we root this all in Jesus' teaching about the leader being "one who serves."

Your mission trip will provide you with a unique opportunity to serve, and to learn about cultural, economic and spiritual differences. As you add your voice to the Church's call for love and justice, you will lead your generation into choices that are better for "the least of these," and not only for the most powerful. Your good works will build community and deepen faith, but our faith means that we cannot ignore the full range of reasons why others suffer, or be satisfied with one project well done. Globalization has spiritual consequences for all of us.

As individuals, we may give our time and our money to help others, but as groups, decisions are often made for reasons other than "doing the right thing." If profit becomes the only thing, selfish actions may be the result: Corporations want cheaper resources and labor since customers want lower prices; towns want to lower taxes, cutting services to those in need; governments support dictatorships and even wars to keep resources flowing.

The concept of "universal human rights" and the needs of fu-

ture generations often take a back seat to today's daily greed.

The approach of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is that globalization is bigger than economics alone. Yet economic structures—the "market" including global trade organizations, property and patent rights—contribute a lot as to whether a given society can feed, educate and care for itself. Technology and competent management can be enormously beneficial, as seen in the spread of inexpensive cell phones and computers, which in turn increase freedom of speech and participation in our global society and commerce. On the flip side, cell towers may be constructed illegally on strategic hilltop land; technology, manufacturing, and energy use accelerate climate change. Globalization is a process of interdependence that we must judge by the quality of how a given place is integrated into the bigger picture.

In practical terms, the Just Globalization study recommends both personal lifestyle changes and changes in the world economy. For lifestyle change, the Presbyterian Hunger Program has lots of great ideas ([www.pcusa.org/joininghands/](http://www.pcusa.org/joininghands/)). One big change to prevent economic panics and speculation, paradoxically, is a small tax on international stock and bond transactions. The Just Globalization report also recommends changes in the conditions under which money is lent to developing nations, affirming more need for public investment, health care and education and fewer "mega-projects" that need outside contractors and are sometimes unsustainable. The global economic crisis has illustrated vividly the interdependence of world capital markets and how much they actually depend on government stability and taxpayer money.

### Your Church is Not Alone!

Representatives of most U.S. churches joined in a "Social Creed for the 21st Century," affirming a one-page vision of a more just and sustainable society ([www.pcusa.org/acswp/social-creed.html](http://www.pcusa.org/acswp/social-creed.html)). Along with a study guide, there is also a 28-minute DVD on the social witness of the church over the past 100 years. The World Communion of Reformed Churches has a Covenanting for Justice program based on the statement of its Accra Assembly ([www.reformedchurches.org/commitjustice.html](http://www.reformedchurches.org/commitjustice.html) OR [www.pcusa.org/trade/acra.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/trade/acra.htm)), and the World Council of Churches also addresses globalization, justice, and faith ([www.oikoumene.org](http://www.oikoumene.org)).

For more information: The full Presbyterian Just Globalization policy statement and a study guide are available ([www.pcusa.org/oga/publication/resolution-on-just-globalization.pdf](http://www.pcusa.org/oga/publication/resolution-on-just-globalization.pdf)). And in addition to mission projects in the United States, you may wish to visit the Presbyterian Church offices at the United Nations and in Washington, D.C. In all this learning and action, may we all be wise global disciples, living in and for the love of God and neighbor.