

# Different People One Message

You are part of a mission team and obviously your team will be comprised of different people, personalities and abilities. Not everyone will be just like you and that is a good thing! God uses all types and He needs all types to be used. It is important that you remember that you are part of a team and that your team has the same mission. You are called to be a bright light to those around you.

(Note: Most of the verses contained below are referring to interactions in a local church body. However, these principles also work well in the temporary body formed in a short-term mission team.)

## Different People

### 1. Remember that it is not about you.

Since the very first training of BMA Short-Term Missions the phrase, "It's not about you!" has been a constant battle cry. This trip is not for you to see the world. This trip is not so you can meet interesting people. This trip certainly is not about you being comfortable. This trip is about the Glory of God. It's about proclaiming His fame to the nations. This will only come through effective self sacrifice. In John 3:30, John the Baptist says that Christ must increase and he must decrease. You need to spend time, effort, and prayer in re-sizing yourself. Make yourself small in comparison with your desire to make Christ great.

### 2. The differences you have on your team will threaten team unity while at the same time making you more effective for the mission.

Imagine trying to minister for two weeks with a team of people that have the same personalities and the same skill sets. You would find yourself very limited in the various ministry situations that you will find yourself in. Your team will be like a ministry swiss army knife: depending on the situation, you will each have an opportunity to be used. At the same time these differences can destroy your team and mission. Learn to appreciate the differences of your team and know God has put you together with your mission in mind. (Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-31 for a Biblical basis of unity in diversity)

### 3. Humble yourselves under the reality of your own sinfulness.

On your team it is crucial that you are not easily offended. You are going to get very tired on your trip, in fact you are probably going to be tired for the entire trip. You will have trouble guarding your mouth and saying the right things with the right attitude. Therefore, you need to aim at having tough skin. The good news is that if we really understand our identity in the gospel, we will be a humble people. No one on your team can criticize you more than the cross criticizes you. God killed His son because you were sinful. Therefore we should all have no problem walking in humility and realizing that we are imperfect. Lots of people go to Matthew 7:1 to say that it is wrong to judge. However, if you continue reading you will see that the point is to walk in the reality that you are a sinner, and then you can gracefully confront others with their sin.

### 4. Beware of Idols.

At the heart of most disagreements sits an idol in the place of pleasing the True God (2 Corinthians 5:9). James 4:1-2 tells us that the thing that causes us to fight is that *"our passions are at war within us"*. We want something so badly that we will throw obedience out the window in the pursuit of that one thing. Love for our teammates doesn't matter. Setting a good example for those we are ministering to does not matter. All that matters is pursuing that idol. It's not usually what we want that is the problem. It is that we want it too badly. When you are using words like: *"I have to..."*, *"I need to..."*, *"Right now I have to..."*, beware, you are in idol territory. Kill that desire before it kills your team's unity.

## 5. Keep disagreements small.

1 Peter 4:8 teaches us, *“Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins”*. Hopefully your team’s love for one another will handle disagreements and sinful actions. But what if there is an issue that must be addressed? Matthew 18:15-20 tells us how to handle a situation in the church when we have been sinned against. The idea is to keep it as small as possible. If you get hurt by a team member, the temptation will be to first form groups within your team. You will be tempted to go to your best buddy on the team and unload on them. This is not the biblical way. We are to go to the person and tell them why we are offended or what they are doing that is bothering us. If those involved cannot come to an agreement or a moment of forgiveness then you need to bring your group leader into the situation.

## 6. Don’t let disagreements simmer.

If you come to a disagreement that cannot be looked over through love then be sure to handle it quickly. Matthew 5:23 says God would rather us settle things with man before we worship him. You will find it very difficult to minister to others if you are angry or hurt by a teammate. The scriptures tell us in Ephesians 4:26 to not let the sun go down on our anger. Let love cover the multitude of your disagreements but when it can’t, settle it fast so satan does not get a foothold into your team’s unity.

## One Message

While your team is different in many ways, the one way that you must be one is in the message you are taking. Your team’s mission should be to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This is our message. But what is the gospel?

The gospel is the good news about what Jesus Christ has done to reconcile sinners to God. Here’s the whole story:

1. The one and only God, who is holy, made us in His image to know Him (Genesis 1:26-28).
2. But we sinned and cut ourselves off from Him (Genesis 3; Romans 3:23).
3. In His great love, God sent His Son, Jesus, to come as king and rescue His people from their enemies—most significantly their own sin (Psalm 2; Luke 1:67-79).
4. Jesus established His kingdom by acting as both a mediating priest and a priestly sacrifice—He lived a perfect life and died on the cross, thus fulfilling the law himself and taking on himself the punishment for the sins of many (Mark 10:45; John 1:14; Hebrews 7:26; Romans 3:21-26, 5:12-21); then He rose again from the dead, showing that God accepted His sacrifice and that God’s wrath against us had been exhausted (Acts 2:24, Romans 4:25).
5. He now calls us to repent of our sins and trust in Christ alone for our forgiveness (Acts 17:30, John 1:12). If we repent of our sins and trust in Christ, we are born again into a new life, an eternal life with God (John 3:16).

Now that’s good news.

A good way to summarize this good news is to biblically unpack the words - God, Man, Christ, and Response.

- 1. God.** God is the creator of all things (Genesis 1:1). He is perfectly holy, worthy of all worship, and will punish sin (1 John 1:5, Revelation 4:11, Romans 2:5-8).
- 2. Man.** All people, though created good, have become sinful by nature (Genesis 1:26-28, Psalm 51:5, Romans 3:23). From birth, all people are alienated from God, hostile to God, and subject to the wrath of God (Ephesians 2:1-3).
- 3. Christ.** Jesus Christ, who is fully God and fully man, lived a sinless life, died on the cross to bear God’s wrath in the place of all who would believe in Him, and rose from the grave in order to give His people eternal life (John 1:1, 1 Timothy 2:5, Hebrews 7:26, Romans 3:21-26, 2 Corinthians 5:21, 1 Corinthians 15:20-22).
- 4. Response.** God calls everyone everywhere to repent of their sins and trust in Christ in order to be saved (Mark 1:15, Acts 20:21, Romans 10:9-10).