

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC MISSION TRIP INFORMATION PACKET

Wednesday July 17th – Thursday July 25th



The Dominican Republic boasts the only flag and coat of arms in the world with an open Bible on it, yet the country is less than 5% evangelized.

OPERATION MATT

REV. 7:9-10

MULTITUDES AROUND THE THRONE

THE VISION:

“After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: ‘Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.’” - Revelations 7:9-10

The mission of Operation MATT is “Engaging people in global Christian ministry to support church planting and growth resulting in **Multitudes Around The Throne**”.

MISSION TRIP TO THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

WHO: This trip is open to any participants 18 years or older who have passed an application process set up for the trip, or anyone who has been on a previous trip. Students under 18 years old who wish to go on this trip will be required to have a parent attend also and both will need to complete an application form. Adults may be required to undergo a background check.

WHAT: What we do is best described as helping to “make Jesus famous” where our Christian national partners are trying to plant a church. We do this through a combination of a medical clinic, eye clinic, children’s VBS, bicycle clinic, construction, street evangelism, neighborhood painting, speaking in schools, and any other way the talents of those who sign up for the trip that can be utilized. Exactly what we do will be determined by who signs up. A sight-seeing and/or other fun day will also take place.

WHEN: Wednesday July 17, 2024 – Thursday July 25, 2024

WHERE: Mr. Bullington and his family served as missionaries in the Dominican Republic for many years and have been taking families on Mission Trips there since 2010. It’s a privilege for them to take people back to the place and people they love so dearly. They have very close ties to the Dominican Baptist Convention and to Pastors of churches in Santiago, and Santo Domingo and other cities in the Cibao Valley region which encompasses the cities of Santiago, La Vega, San Francisco, and Bonao, to name a few.



WHY: The Dominican Republic is less than 5% evangelized. Dominicans love Americans and as such, the door is wide open for sharing the good news in a variety of ways.

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COST: \$1,200 plus cost of airfare either purchased by Operation MATT or on your own (Estimated cost, with airfare, \$2100)

This includes airfare, local transportation, meals and lodging (based on normal occupancy)¹ about \$35 worth of pesos for spending money, etc. This does not include the following, which will be your responsibility:

- 1) You will need to come prepared to pay \$35 for your first checked bag both ways unless told otherwise. (American Airlines only accepts debit/credit card at the Santiago airport. No Pre-paid Cards.)
- 2) Meals in the airports on your own, Souvenirs, and Snacks

Important:

- All checks should be made out to Operation MATT with “July 2024” on the memo line (INSTRUCT DONORS TO NOT PUT YOUR NAME ON THE CHECK).
- Since all payments constitute charitable contributions to a non-profit organization for which you will receive a statement for tax purposes, all funds become non-refundable once donated.
- Funds are not held over from trip to trip. Extra/left-over funds, if any, are used by Operation MATT and its ministry.
- Should you have to cancel due to Covid, we will hold on to your funds for a future trip. If tickets have been purchased, you would be able to use that ticket for future travel.

HOW: Money will be raised through support letters. (See the financial section for full details)

DATES: Immediately: 1) Put these dates on your calendar, 2) start filling out the Online Application. The Link is on page 9 of this packet. 3) apply for a passport ASAP (if you don't have one already) and 4) send out support letters (see sample letter).

Application / Sign-Up Deadline <u>\$100 deposit plus copy of passport</u> must be received by this date.	Monday April 15th
Team Meeting/Zoom Call #1 Overview, History, Trip Financial Details, Payment of \$1,100 is due.	Tuesday, May 14th at 7pm
Team Meeting/Zoom Call #2 Work Assignments, Rooming, Safety Briefing. Payment for airfare is due if OM is purchasing your ticket.	Tuesday, June 11th at 7pm
Team Meeting #3 IN-PERSON Ministry Activity Training, Pack Supplies	Thursday, July 11th at 7pm

¹ Participants who might need a single room for any reason would need to pay the extra cost involved.

SPECIAL INFORMATION

- **Covid 19 information is on the Health & Safety Form in the back of this packet**
- You will be able to call home while on the trip, although we encourage you to take a break from your “devices”. There is usually a good WiFi connection in the hotels we stay in so you can connect with home via the internet.
- Malaria, despite what the CDC or other sites may say, is NOT an issue in the Dominican Republic where we will be working. Note, however, that in the future, when you donate blood, you will have to disclose your trip. Please make sure your tetanus vaccination is current.
- All participants and parents/guardians will be required to attend a Health and Safety Briefing and sign an Acknowledgement form (included at back of this packet).

SUPPORT LETTERS

On the following page, you will find a sample support letter that can be used as a template for yours. Some things to keep in mind:

- Generally speaking, support letters should be short and simple; never more than a page long.
- The biggest mistake people make is not sending it out to enough people. Do not decide for others whether or not they would want to support you. Send it out to as many people as you can. We can guarantee you that those who you thought would support you often don't, and those you never dreamed would support you often will. Thankfully, to date, no one who followed these guidelines has ever had any problem raising their support.
- Always include a self-addressed stamped envelope. A picture is also a good idea.
- Checks should be made out to “Operation MATT”
- “July 2024” should be written on the memo line. (Instruct your donors not to put your name on the check. If your name is on it, the donation may not be tax deductible.)
- Checks should be mailed to you, not to Operation MATT. You will keep the information slip returned with the check for your records, then turn your money in as you receive it, and we will keep a record of your contributions, how much you've raised, etc.
- You may word your support letter in your own style but you MUST write the bottom portion of the letter exactly as written on the Sample.

SAMPLE SUPPORT LETTER

Be sure and use YOUR name and address!

You have to supply all of the necessary personalized information that is in parenthesis below.

FROM (YOUR NAME)

(Your Street Address). • (Your City, State & Zip)

E-mail: (Your e-mail address) • Phone: (Your Phone Number) • Cell: (Your Cell Number)

(Today's Date)

Dear Family and Friends,

Greetings and thanks for taking the time to read this letter. I am doing something I have never had the privilege of doing before—writing a letter of support to family and friends, old and new, for a mission trip opportunity the Lord has brought my way. This (spring, summer, etc.) I will hopefully have the privilege of going with (name of church, school or Christian organization) to minister in (place). We hope to be involved in a combination of prayer walking, medical clinics, eye clinics, sports clinics, backyard Bible clubs, construction and evangelistic presentations. The mission work in (place) is far from over, and their love for Americans creates an open door for sharing the Good News in a variety of effective ways.

So, I am writing to ask you to prayerfully consider supporting me on this journey. First and foremost, I covet your prayers. (Place) is a 3rd world country and we will no doubt have to face many unforeseen challenges. If you would be willing to support me financially as well, please use the form below to send a check made out to “Operation MATT” to my address, listed below, in the enclosed envelope with “(July 2024)” written on the memo line. Checks are tax deductible as long as my name is Not on the check. Your help would be deeply appreciated to raise the (\$amount) I will need for this trip. When I return home, I’ll be sending out a follow-up report.

Thanks and God Bless!
(Participant Name)

Please cut off this slip and return it in the envelope provided — Thank you!

Name: _____

E-mail Address: _____

___ I will be one of your prayer partners and commit to pray for you weekly before the project and daily during it.

___ I will financially support you with a gift of \$ _____.
Please make checks payable to “Operation MATT”. Checks can only counted as a charitable contribution if there is no name on the memo line. Write: “**July 2024**” instead.

Please mail checks to: (Your Name, and Address)

PAYING FOR YOUR TRIP

Another Way To Receive Donations For Your Mission Trip

You can also provide a link to your potential donors where they can pay via Credit Card or directly from their Bank Account (via ACH). Here are the steps to enable On-Line Giving for your Mission Trip.

First you must set up a Public Profile and here's how:

- Log into managedmissions.com
- Click on your trip to view
- Select the "Public Profile" tab
- Enable your public profile by selecting the "Enable My Public Profile" checkbox:
- Once enabled, completely fill in the form
- Click "Save and Preview"
- If you are satisfied, select "Save and Publish"

All public profiles must be reviewed and approved. Once approved, which will be done within 24 hours, your profile will become live and you can share the URL in your communications with potential donors.

The URL itself will be formatted as follows:

<https://operationmatt.managedmissions.com/MyTrip/myname>

If the donor uses a Credit Card, the donor will have the option of paying the processing fee (~2.5%). If your donor prefers the ACH method, Operation MATT will pay the fee (\$0.50).

We will of course continue to accept checks mailed to:

Operation MATT
4651 Woodstock Road,
Suite 208-179,
Roswell GA 30075.

(Remind your donors to not list your name on the check).

Note regarding Donor Advised Funds (DAF):

They are all very slow to process checks, so please initiate the transaction at least 2 weeks before each deadline to insure that the funds are received on time. Operation MATT has been "approved" by National Christian Foundation, Fidelity, Schwab Charitable and Merrill Lynch. However they sometimes will ask us for additional verification of our status as a 501c3 nonprofit organization. Please contact Gary Wirth 678-592-1120 or garyswirth@gmail.com if your DAF is requesting additional information before allowing you to "recommend" a donation by them to us.

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PACKING FOR OPERATION MATT TRIP TO THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

- **One suitcase** to check which must be under 50 lbs and include any medications you've been given to take as well as any liquids that are too big to be allowed in your carryon luggage. **NOTE:** You will need to come prepared to pay \$35 for your first checked bag both going and coming. Also, American Airlines only accepts Credit/Debit card payments in Santiago for the return flight/baggage check-in.
- **One carry-on** with the heaviest things you are taking like books or heavy shoes, which will help ensure that your suitcase is not too heavy, as well as at least two changes of clothes should your suitcase get lost. This will go into the overhead compartment on the plane.
- **One backpack or purse** to keep at your feet with anything you want to use on the flight itself and to use to take things back and forth to the worksites in the Dominican Republic.

PACKING LIST

- Two copies of the first page of your **passport**. (Leave one at home. Give one to trip leader.)
- **Bible** (Bilingual is good, if you can.)
- **Anything you were asked to purchase for the trip** (crayons, sidewalk chalk) or were given by the team to put in your suitcase (meds, glasses, Bibles, etc.)
- **Hat, poncho** or **small umbrella** (it can be hot!) **DO NOT** put your umbrella in carryon.)
- **Hand Sanitizer, N95 masks, and Anti-Bacterial Wipes**
- **Mosquito repellent** (Spray, wipes, bracelets, etc.)
- **Portable Kleenex packets**. (Toilet Paper may not always be available)
- **Snacks** (You will be fed three meals a day but... just in case you don't like it!)
- **Personal meds** - Always bring meds for diarrhea & constipation whether you normally struggle with that or not. Bring whatever else you normally take or need.
- **Feminine supplies**
- **Clothes** for 8 days, as per the dress code. You will get dirty and sweaty.
- **Fiber** Take fiber tablets (like gummy bear tablets) daily and drink lots of water
- **Church/Service Attire** – See Dress Code below – Pack for 3 services.
- **Money for incidentals**, - You will be provided with \$35 worth of pesos for 2 dinners and snacks. However you should bring money for souvenirs, etc. We would suggest at least \$100. \$70 for checked baggage fees and \$30 for admission to tourist sites, and other recreational activities
- **Water Bottle** – Your own easily identifiable drinking container. We'll provide the water.
- **Toiletry items** – Soap, shampoo, 2 toothbrushes, toothpaste, deodorant, hairdryer, (You'll be taking more showers than usual... or at least we hope you will!)
- **For Beach Day**
 - Lightweight vinyl day pack for the beach if you have one.
 - Beach towel, Sunglasses and Sunscreen
 - Bathing suit with T-shirt and pants/shorts/cover-up during travel or shopping.

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DRESS CODE

We would appreciate everyone being in dress code from the time they arrive at the airport until we get back. This has to do with modesty and Dominican cultural norms.

THIS IS A GOOD LIST OF WHAT WOULD BE OK TO WEAR. IT'S BEST IF YOU DO NOT WEAR ANYTHING NOT ON THIS LIST.

Females:

- Tops with sleeves (T-shirts, polo shirts, blouses, etc.), preferably non-white, no cleavage
- Hoodie or Windbreaker
- Shorts (non-athletic) that touch the top of your knees when standing.
- Jeans, capris pants, flowy pants, scrubs or long skirts (no leggings or anything just as tight fitting as leggings, no holes)
- Long skirt (long enough to cover your knees when seated) or pants for Sunday Church &/or other evening services or events. (There are usually **3 events** where these are required).
- Dresses that match the top and skirt standards listed above. No holes or slits (for church)
- Shoes – sandals and tennis shoes
- One piece bathing suit or tankini (For the beach only)
- Water Shoes (to protect against rocks/coral, that won't easily come off)

Males:

- Tops with sleeves (T-shirts, polo shirts, button down shirts, etc.). No tank tops • Hoodie or Windbreaker
- Long shorts that ride just above the knees (guys can wear appropriate LONG athletic shorts for children's work, sports, etc.).
- Long pants - Jeans, Dockers, slacks, scrubs & closed toe shoes (for evangelism, medical & eye clinics, worship services, construction). Must have long pants for Sunday Church &/or other evening services or events.
- Hats (without offensive logos).
- Modest bathing suit & flip flops (for the beach only)
- Shoes – closed toe type for construction, worship and touring
- Water Shoes (to protect against rocks/coral, that won't easily come off).



MISSION TRIP APPLICATION FORMS

Operation MATT uses a service called **ManagedMissions**. This service stores all relevant trip documents, tracks and stores Applications, and facilitates fund-raising record-keeping. It is also used to set up a profile that you can send to potential donors for trip contributions.

Please use this site to track your funding progress and retrieve any handouts/documents related to your trip.

IF YOU HAVE COMPLETED AN APPLICATION WITHIN IN THE LAST 4 YEARS, YOU DO NOT HAVE TO COMPLETE A NEW ONE. HOWEVER PLEASE CHECK YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION, T-SHIRT SIZE, AND PASSPORT NUMBER/DATES IN THE MANAGEDMISSIONS.COM SITE TO MAKE SURE THEY ARE CURRENT.

Please follow this link to fill out your application, which is due by Monday April 15th, and make payment of the \$100 deposit and copy of your Passport.

<https://operationmatt.managedmissions.com/MissionApplication/Start/39195>

OPERATION MATT HEALTH AND SAFETY BRIEFING AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
(This form must be signed by all participants)

COVID 19 NOTE

As of June 2022, masks are no longer mandated in public, and neither the United States or Dominican Republic require that participants be tested, or provide proof of vaccination.

General

- Safety is one of our top priorities. It is important to us not only to do everything in our power to keep you safe, but to be sure that inasmuch as it can depend on us, for you to feel safe.
- Those who know the situation best are our Dominican partners who are the primary source for trusted information concerning the safety situation anywhere we go.
- As an American, you're a rock star. Everyone wants to be your friend. The question is "How am I called to steward that status for the kingdom of God?"
- Dominicans are very friendly, and much more touchy-feely than we are. Ex. Talking about weight, race, flirting, wanting to touch, play with, and braid your hair, etc. But they are also very modest, conservative, etc.
- In addition to the adults on our team, we will be accompanied at all times by our Dominican leadership team, pastors, lay Christian leaders and church members. We never serve alone.
- We maintain a strong adult to student ratio, and division into family groups to ensure more direct supervision.
- We conduct Background Checks on all Adult participants, participate in the State Department STEP program and collect student passports for safe-keeping while in-country.
- When we are doing the Lord's work, there is an inherent risk that we do our best to mitigate through best practices and prayer. We know who the true enemy is, and that he is a "roaring lion seeking to devour." We would discourage anyone from going who does not acknowledge the reality of spiritual warfare.

The following is a summary that includes but is not limited to the practices and rules to insure good health and safety on the trip. Other situation specific rules may be initiated during the trip.

Safety

- Never leave the group, individually or with others, without telling an adult leader.
- Never be alone (except in your hotel room).
- Never open your hotel room door without first identifying who is on other side.
- Always be within eye-sight or ear-shot of an Adult leader when in a public place.
- Do not give out your phone number, email address or social media account information to anyone without an adult leaders approval.
- Always immediately tell an adult leader if you have any interaction or contact with someone that you feel is inappropriate.
- Never accept a business card or brochure or snack or drink from anyone other than what is approved by adult leader.
- Boys and girls are never allowed in each other's rooms.

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Health

- Do not drink, or brush your teeth, or wash your toothbrush in tap water.
- Bring fiber supplements such as “gummy bears”.
- Drink water abundantly. Stay hydrated even if you don’t feel really hot/sweaty.
- If in someone’s home – respectfully decline any offered food unless approved by an adult leader.
- Wear sunscreen if you’re spending more than 30 minutes outside.
- Make the trip medical leader aware of any allergies and prescription meds.

Conclusion

- Though there are never any guarantees in this world, thankfully, to date, no one who has followed these rules has ever had a safety issue on any of our trips.
- While we will do everything in our power to keep you safe, your safety ultimately depends on your cooperation and compliance with the safety measures that have been put in place. If at any time, you feel unsafe, it is your responsibility to speak up immediately.

By signing below, you acknowledge that you have read and understand this information about the health and safety risks, practices and rules involved with foreign travel to the Dominican Republic, including the Trip Packets and various other distributed trip materials. You also have been made aware of the U.S. State Department site where foreign travel risks are summarized.

You understand that if any un-safe event occurs as a result of non-compliance with the practices and rules that have been explained to you, you will not hold liable the Operation MATT leadership nor other adult chaperones.

Participant Printed Name _____

Signature _____