



## **Episode 006: Creating Leaders for Short Term Missions Show Notes**

Mark Crocker is the founder of STM Leader.com. He has trained countless volunteers in the US and Canada across denominations. Mark resides with his family in Victoria, British Columbia.

### ***How did you become passionate about short term missions?***

- First missions experience was a short term mission trip. Within six months of the Soviet Union falling apart, he found himself on a short term trip to the Ukraine.
- Saw what a rapid movement that could happen through short term activities.

### ***What is the value of short term missions?***

- Short term mission is a tool – it can be used well, or it can be used poorly. We can always find a bad apple, and if we lump everyone together it is probably not the best way to think about short term missions in general.
- All short term mission must have long term goals. It needs to be a part of someone’s long term goals.
- When you use specific skills that help long term agendas of long term hosts, STMs can be very effective.
- Short term mission is still mission just like long term mission. It can be helpful to be there for a long time and it can be helpful to be there for a short time, depending on what it is that you’re doing.

### ***When it comes to STMs, your focus is on training the leaders - why focus on leaders?***

- There is the expectation that a good heart and great intentions is enough. With all other ministries, we look for qualifications. We have an expectation of expertise. STMs should also have a high standard as well.
- Training team leaders raises the standards.
- A team leader should see an STM as a personal development opportunity. They should be asking, “What do I need to know to succeed?” and “How do I grow?”



### ***How is the training done?***

- We use technology to do the training – Skype, to be specific.

### ***What foundational characteristics are you looking for in a short term mission leader?***

- 2 main characteristics: willing to work hard and they show up on time
- These skills enable them to learn the skills they will need along the way
- Sometimes the people who are the most popular in North America are not necessarily the best hosts on the ground. Rather it is the people who work hard on the ground and work under the direction of the hosts on the ground.
- A team leader should have a little bit of ‘fear’ – they are often the strongest leaders because they are willing to get their hands dirty and help out in any way possible.
- Sometimes the most difficult people are people who have experienced success in ministry in North America because they assume they can transplant their approach in a new context without adapting to the context.
- If you go in with a humble attitude, you will be successful.

### ***You’ve developed a curriculum for training short term leaders. Can you give us a brief description of this curriculum?***

- We equip team leaders with all the tools they need to train their team
- 6 Sessions long
- Focus on 5 Key areas:
  - *Administration* – how do we do this so we don’t harm our church’s charitable status? How do we think through security issues?
  - *Team Leadership* – a team leader is a different beast than any other leader – you have to care for a ministry agenda as well as your teams’ personal lives 24/7 for several weeks
  - *Relationship with the Host* – if things fail on the field, it is often between the team leader and the host due to a misunderstanding of expectations.
  - *Training* – What does training look like? Training includes up to 12 different sessions depending on the leader, the context and the destination.
    - Team building
    - Cross cultural issues
    - First do no harm principle
    - Commissioning the Team and recognizing skills in order to help in specific and needed ways



- The Holy Trinity of Short Term Missions – Children, Crusades and Construction. What would it look like if we asked our hosts, “What are you attempting to accomplish and how can we serve you and help you achieve your goals?”
  - *Debriefing & Return* – When things fail at home, it is due to the lack of proper debriefing. When there is no support system from their local church, you lose people’s opportunity to learn what the long term impact of the trip is for them. The team leader is the local support for the team in their return process.

***What tips to do have for identifying leaders for short term trips?***

- Leaders need to be grounded in a church – they must be a part of the life and vitality of the church
- Who is the hard worker who is willing to get the job done?
- The willingness to grow in this capacity
- Whose hearts are outward focused?

“When people return from short term trips, if we have done our job well, people will get to experience “aversion of themselves.” They get to try on other identities and learn new capacities and passions that they haven’t experienced before. They’ll look for similar opportunities in North America and better recognize their part in the Body of Christ.”

***What resources do you recommend to leaders of short term mission trips?***

- *Helping without Hurting* – Brian Fikkert and Steve Corbett
- *Serving with Eyes Wide Open* – David Livermore

***How can our listeners learn more about what you’re doing?***

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