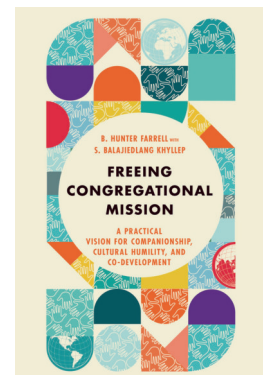
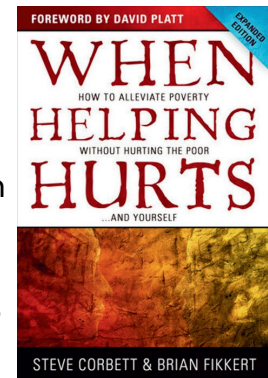
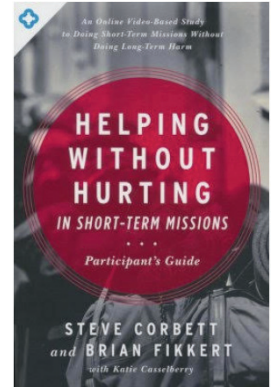


Lessons Learned Along the Way

Each FPC team commissioned to service in Guatemala has dedicated four months of preparations to our relational mission with Juntos GT. In the beginning teams utilized the “Helping Without Hurting: In Short-Term Missions” curriculum adapted from Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert’s book, “When Helping Hurts.” In 2022, “Freeing Congregational Mission,” by Hunter Farrell and Bala Khylllep was added as a guiding resource for the PCUSA congregations seeking healthy cross-cultural mission. Following are a selection of takeaway lessons that have been learned, experienced, and adopted along the way.

- Paternalism is poison. It perpetuates a superior and inferior roles. It soothes uncomfortable feelings about wealth disparity for the material resourced (rich) while inadvertently robbing the dignity of the “recipient.”
- Savior-complex: We are not “saving” anyone. Christ has already handled that work. We have a much better chance of participating in God’s work when we humbly respect that God is already present and moving in the communities we visit. When we assume that our ways and our perspectives are better, more advanced, more “efficient,” we miss out opportunities to interrupt the legacy of colonialism and break its underlying message of white superiority. We miss out on the gifts that are revealed in collaboration and companionship.
- Selfie Mission, those “likeable” and “shareable” activities, primarily meant to frame up individuals and groups in benevolent postures to market our “help of the less fortunate.” Whose mission is it, anyway? Charitable activities centered around the activity and devoid of mutually healing and restoring relationships is antithetical to the self-giving mission of Jesus Christ that constantly points to God.



A Mission Reforming: Companionship – Cultural Humility – Co-Development

- Companionship acknowledges Jesus’ mission was built on human relationships and consisted of mutual accompaniment, shared vulnerability, a centeredness on the sending God, and mission from the margins: the presence, perspective, and leadership of those forced to live in the margins of society.
- Cultural Humility requires us to continually engage in a process of self-reflection and selfcritique, to assess and adjust to power imbalances, as a reflective, life-long learning practice.
- Co-Development, affirming that things are more complex and nuanced than what meets an unfamiliar eye, rejects the sense of power in “giver” and “receiver” dynamics and invites companions into a mutual process of bringing the gifts has entrusted to them to the circle to share with their mission companions.

To be continued.

Next month: Opportunities On the Horizon