



Are Your Mission Trips Using the Right Methods?

By Tory Ruark, Chief Operations Officer at SOE

We often take [Standard #1 \(God-Centeredness\)](#) for granted. We're in ministry so of course we're all God-Centered! While we might have the right heart, we would be naïve to think we're all doing things the right way. That's why **our first Standard calls on us to use "wise, biblical, and culturally-appropriate methods which bear spiritual fruit."**

When considering our methods, however, we should begin with the end in mind and work backwards. The quote in the paragraph above is directly from [The Standards of Excellence](#) and provides for a nice road map. Before we consider our methods, let's consider spiritual fruit.

What is spiritual fruit for your ministry? In other words, what do you hope to see happen in the world because your organization exists? We must know this before we can make decisions on our methods.

One of my seminary professors put it this way; "the vision is what you want to see happen and the mission is how you'll go about it. So the mission particularizes the vision." At SOE, our vision is to see every mission trip done with God-honoring excellence. Our mission is to promote [The Standards of Excellence in Short-Term Mission](#) as the roadmap to excellence through membership and benefits, onsite training, coaching and consulting, and conferences and workshops. **Once you know your vision, you can begin making decisions about your methods (or mission).**

So, the next question is, "are you using the right methods?" Our methods should be wise, biblical and culturally appropriate. I really like how a stool illustrates the way this should work. If you're missing even just one leg on the stool in the diagram to the right, it collapses. In the same way, if our methods are missing any one of these characteristics, our mission will fall apart and we won't bear spiritual fruit.

Upon further examination of this stool, however, you'll see another important support system—a rod between each leg. In the diagram these represent the senders, goers, and receivers. As we assess our methods through the filter of wise, biblical, and culturally appropriate, it's important that we hear from all three groups of people. Proverbs 11:14 says, "For lack of guidance a



nation falls, but victory is won through many advisers.” While a lot of people can agree and still be wrong, it’s in the diversity of the Body of Christ that we can fight ethnocentrism and truly preach Christ crucified and not our culture.

To go deeper on this subject, check out our webinar “Are You Using the Right Methods?” The webinar explores what wise, biblical, and culturally appropriate methods look like and how to assess our methods.



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