



# Should Kids Go on Overseas Missions Trips?

by Jon Bueno

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**R**ecently, concerned pastors and district leaders have talked to me about the advisability of taking children's teams overseas. After discussing this with my colleagues, I felt I needed to make the following observations to give us some guidance in this regard.

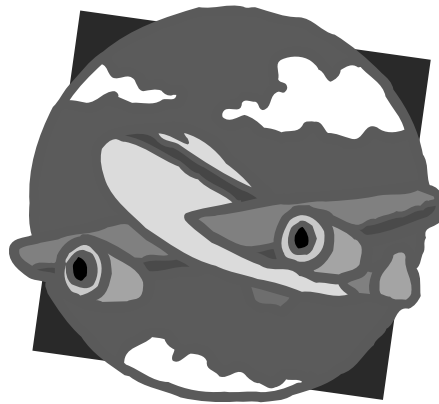
With the world as it is, it is dangerous for adults at this time to venture into trips overseas that have not been approved—not only by the insurance programs here at AGWM, but also by our personnel at Headquarters and overseas. It is increasingly important for people who make these trips to have the appropriate approvals in order to ensure safe accommodations, as well as to be advised of any particular dangers in the destination country. I do not know of any country in the world that is perfectly safe for travel these days. While it is not my purpose to alarm anyone, it is my responsibility to express some concerns.

## Cautions

There are several reasons why taking children overseas is even more precarious than teenage trips, or even adults.

✿ Children are often more susceptible to diseases

and physical hazards overseas. Adults can measure the seriousness of not drinking the water or eating fresh vegetables. Children do not always have those precautions and, in a moment, they can eat or drink something that may cause them permanent damage. We have seen this even with missionary kids, and so it does present a hazard for teams going over even for short-term ministries.



✿ Unfortunately, in many of the countries overseas, there has been a rash of kidnappings. This has happened at the most unexpected times and certainly has brought grief to those involved. Sometimes there is a great demand on the slave trade in these countries and other dangerous situations for children. This represents a serious

threat to the safety of our children going overseas.

In addition, in large crowds where the people do not know the language and customs, it is easy for them to be separated and lost in the process. All the implications of what this might bring in the big airports and marketplaces of our world presents a serious concern for all of us here at AGWM.

## Learning Opportunities at Home

I believe that the issues that children can learn overseas can be taught them through video and the visiting missionary here at home. It is my feeling at this time, especially since the world is in such a volatile condition, that it is better for children's teams not to go overseas unless they have the total approval of the mission field, missionaries of their destination country, and the appropriate offices here at AGWM. It is certainly imperative that they take up the insurance program offered here, so that if anything does happen, we have some recourse to help them in emergencies.

We are very grateful for what all the children are doing through BGMC. Children's pastors across our nation have really taken this

