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IMB recommends mission volunteers postpone travel

by IMB Staff, posted Monday, March 09, 2020 (one month ago)

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) -- In light of the continuing global expansion of the COVID-19 virus (coronavirus), the International Mission Board's coronavirus task force and senior leadership recommend that mission volunteers from U.S. churches postpone international mission-trip travel through April 30. This date could be extended and will be reevaluated by April 15.

IMB also recommends that people who have not yet purchased tickets for future travel wait and monitor continued risks of travel before buying tickets. Individuals with pre-existing conditions or immunocompromised health issues are encouraged not to travel.

The task force, which was formed to monitor the situation and make recommendations on behalf of the global organization, is extending recommendations to churches based on personal health risks, risks of spreading the virus, and the possibility of quarantine or delay by local governments including the U.S.

"We are thankful for the churches that partner with our IMB personnel around the world. The churches and their mission teams are vital to our work," said IMB President Paul Chitwood. "This is an unusual time for all of us, but we know that God is sovereign and that His work will not be stopped by this virus."

Chitwood added that the situation "is changing moment by moment," saying:

"We just don't know where a group might be delayed or which countries may not allow international travelers to enter or exit. We've already had to cancel several overseas meetings due to sudden travel bans and challenges associated with government-imposed quarantines. This recommendation for delayed mission-trip travel is temporary, but we believe it is necessary at this time."

The organization continues to recommend that everyone follow CDC travel guidelines and U.S. State Department guidelines. IMB personnel are not currently traveling to or through CDC level 2 or 3 countries, as well as Hong Kong.

IMB leadership remains in prayer for all those affected and does not foresee any long-term cessation of mission activity.

Updates will continue to be added to the IMB's coronavirus response webpage.



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