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M.A. Mission –

Part Two: Dissertation

Subject

An Assessment of Short-Term Missions

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Title: *An Assessment of Short-Term Missions*

Summary of the dissertation

This dissertation will deal with short-term missions in other countries. Since the early 1960's there has been an enormous and rapid growth of short-term overseas mission work worldwide. The quality and value of this type of mission work varies considerably.

This work is mainly organised by para-church organisations, but there is also a significant amount of short-term missions work conducted independently by individuals and local churches. The relative aspects of each type will be examined.

In making an assessment of both the quality and value of the work I shall examine the following:

- 1) Biblical examples of short-term missions
- 2) Its history and growth.
- 3) The various tasks undertaken on short-term missions.
- 4) The relationship with long-term mission work.
- 5) The relationship with the host churches.
- 6) The benefit and disadvantages that the short-term missions are to long-term missions and their hosts.
- 7) The training and cultural orientation of the participants
- 8) Examples of best practice.
- 9) The financial aspects of missions
- 10) The benefits of short-term missions to the participants and their churches.

This movement is relatively new in the history of missions and few books have been written on the subject. Such books as there are, tend to concentrate on providing information for individuals contemplating participation. Very little study has been made of the value or quality of the work. Given the shortage of study material, I shall include both case studies and material obtained from interviews. I shall also make use of any literature published by mission organisations promoting their short-term mission work or the policies and philosophy of the organisation. The interviews will be conducted with representatives of various aspects of this study. These will include:

- 1) Participants in the mission work past and present.
- 2) Leaders of organisations involved in short-term missions
- 3) Leaders and pastors on the mission field who host short-term missions.
- 4) Church leaders whose members have participated.
- 5) Long-term missionaries that partner with short-term mission work.

1. Introduction

In making an assessment of Short-term Missions, it is first necessary to determine the criteria with which they should be judged. Are they beneficial to the overall mission work of the church? This question is too large to be tackled in one bite; we must break it down into smaller considerations. The answers to many of the questions about Short-Term Missions will inevitably be highly subjective and often reflect the experience of the person giving the opinion. At this stage I must declare an interest. I am Chief Executive Officer of a mission agency, approximately half of whose activity revolves around Short-Term Missions. Nevertheless, this dissertation will seek to explore both sides of the debate. The criteria listed below are far from exhaustive. These particular ones have been chosen because they represent most of the areas of criticism made of Short-Term Missions.

The main areas to be assessed will be:

- 1) What are valid aims for short-term Missions?
- 2) How successfully are the aims carried to conclusion?
- 3) Is the experience beneficial to the mission participant?
- 4) Are there benefits to the sending agency?
- 5) Are there lasting benefits to the hosts of the mission trip?
- 6) Are there benefits to the home churches of participants?
- 7) Is the preparation and training adequate?
- 8) Are adequate measures taken to avoid dangers or poor practice?
- 9) Are the tasks undertaken by participants appropriate?

Short-Term Missions can be divided into two categories. Those that are organised by para-church or denominational agencies, and those organised by local churches for their own members and through their own contacts abroad. The second category are virtually impossible to assess comprehensively because no one documents or records their activities outside their own church.¹ Assessment of these is largely anecdotal in nature.

¹ Staub Dick. Stepping Out. Ch 4 'Opening The World'. YWAM Publishing, Seattle 1992. p35

A further division of categories concerns the participants. Those that participate as an individual, or with one or two others. Secondly - and this is overwhelmingly the majority - those that are part of a team numbering on average 6 to 12 members. Participants can also be divided into those who have skills and training to offer to the mission trip and those who are without a skill but willing to try anything that they are put to.²

2. Phenomenal Growth

There are currently fewer long-term missionaries going out from western nations than at any time in the twentieth century.³ For example the number of long-term missionaries in Pakistan has declined 30% in the past four years.⁴ (This may partly be explained by the increasing militancy of some Muslim clerics in Pakistan). Since the early 1960's there has been an enormous and rapid growth of short-term overseas mission work worldwide. Accurate figures are difficult to obtain, but it has been estimated that from the USA alone, numbers of participants in short-term mission grew from 6,000 in 1975 to 60,000 in 1996, a tenfold increase. The Southern Baptists of the United States alone sent out 75,000 short-term team members and 81,000 other volunteers in 1996.⁵

Student researcher, Thomas Chandler calculated that only 540 individuals from North America went on Short Term Missions in 1965.⁶ John Kyle, Vice President of the Evangelical Foreign Missions Association estimates the current figure at an incredible 450,000.⁷

² Livingstone Greg. *Stepping Out*. Ch 2 'Does it Work?' YWAM Publishing, Seattle 1992. p23

³ Forward David. *The Essential Guide to the Short-Term Mission Trip*. Moody Press. Chicago 1998. p.13

⁴ Bush Luis. *The Long and short of Mission Terms*. An article for the magazine 'Mission Frontiers' published by USCWM 3 February 2000.

⁵ Forward David. *The Essential Guide to the Short-Term Mission Trip*. Moody Press. Chicago 1998. p.14

⁶ Loobie Susan G. *Short-Term Missions: Is It Worth It?* Article for Latin American Mission News Service. January 2000.

⁷ Ibid.

The two organisations leading the way have been Youth With A Mission (YWAM) and Operation Mobilisation (O.M.). Neither organisation have kept good statistical records but YWAM now have 20,000 applicants each year working short-term, from 400 bases in 103 countries. In the United States a study in 1992 showed over 350 agencies offering short-term service.⁸ In Britain the 1999 edition of the Short-Term Missions Directory⁹ contains 110 organisations offering 13,000 places, the majority abroad. One of the most well known is Tear Fund, who in the summer of 2000 have 215 short-term mission places filled.¹⁰ Students who have the longer summer vacation have dominated the make-up of British short-term teams. John Witt who participated in three summer teams to Africa in three years at Liverpool University estimates that 50% of the Christian Union - and up to 80% of the *active* (those that joined in C.U. programmes and activities) members participated in a short-term mission programme during their time at university.¹¹

The YWAM statistical and information publication 'The Go manual', has the following table showing growth over the past 20 years.¹²

Table 1. The growth of YWAM

	1980	1985	1989	1997
Number of nations	44	63	90	135
Number of mission locations	100	224	366	630
Number of Full-time staff	2473	5102	6401	10,622
Number of students	3128	7191	7481	13,508
Number of short-termers (including students)		12,706	17,525	32,152

⁸ Judd Richard. *Do Short-Term Programmes Achieve The Purposes For Which They Were Established?* Dissertation for degree course at London Bible College 1996. p1

⁹ Published by Christian Vocations based in Upper Gornal, West Midlands.

¹⁰ Interview with David Hart, Short-term missions coordinator for Tear Fund. 19 January 2000

¹¹ Interview with John Witt, formerly a computer studies student, now a computer programmer in Manchester. 15 January 2000.

¹² Walsh A. & Dryden G. *The Go Manual*. YWAM Publishing. Seattle 1999. p9

2.1 Reasons for the Growth

Patrick Johnson's research notes a decline in traditional missionary activity dating from the late 1950s. He attributes this to a drift to a more liberal theology in many western churches. The traditional soteriological emphasis being replaced by a more socio-political agenda.¹³ Indicative of this trend was the integration of the International Missionary Council into the World Council of Churches in 1961, as a result of liberal-led thinking in the late 1950s. Many theological seminaries began to question the validity of missiology as a subject worthy of inclusion in the theological curriculum.¹⁴ The 1950s also saw a rise in the establishment and growing independence of national churches in traditional missionary locations.¹⁵ This was evidence for the liberal contention that traditional missionary work was no longer required. Throughout the first half of the century there had been a decline of Christianity in Europe, coupled with - and perhaps as a result of - the trend towards liberalism. Robinson describes this change as 'From mission base to mission field.'¹⁶

This was certainly the background or the context in which Loren Cunningham and George Verwer undertook their first short-term mission trips into Mexico in the late 1950s. There is no indication from their writings that this decline in soteriological emphasis in missions was at the forefront of their minds as a motivation. Rather they saw the vastness of the need to evangelise and were impatient to get on with the work by every means at their disposal and the means for them were college students in their summer vacation. In Verwer's case, the decline of Christianity in Europe presented a challenge to be addressed, and led to his early departure from the U.S.A. to set up bases in Britain and Belgium in 1961.¹⁷

¹³ Johnson Patrick. *The Church is Bigger Than You Think*. Christian Focus Publications, Fearn, Ross-shire. 1998. p24

¹⁴ Ibid. p59.

¹⁵ Neill Stephen. *A History of Christian Missions*. Pelican Books 1971. p510-558

¹⁶ Robinson Martin. *To Win The West*. Monarch Publications, Crowborough, East Sussex, U.K. 1996. p58-74

¹⁷ Hicks David. *Globalising Missions, a case study of Operation Mobilisation*. Editorial Unilit, Miami 1994. p10

One of the main practical reasons that has facilitated the growth in short-term mission has been the reduced cost of travel, particularly by air. The air fare to southern Africa from the United Kingdom is now the equivalent of one week's average salary and takes only ten hours.

Sociologists tell us that the post-war generations of 'Boomers' and 'Busters'¹⁸ are less willing to commit themselves. That 'Boomers' want personal fulfilment and 'Busters' are motivated by a desire to care for their group. Short-term experience gives those who are reluctant to commit themselves a chance to try-it-and-see-first, and certainly gives ample opportunity for the self-fulfilment for 'Busters' and the experiences and relationships that motivate 'Boomers' into action.¹⁹ The team environment is ideal.

Increased leisure time has also led to a culture of activism. An experience-it-for-yourself attitude. Adventure activities and holidays and a pursuance of new leisure activities have increased enormously. All this adds up to the opportunity and the motivation to experience short-term missions and has led to the growth that we have seen.

3. Definitions

How long is a short-term mission? There is no real definition. In a discussion at the recent consultation of Global Connections for monitoring compliance with the 'Code of Best Practice for Short-Term Missions', it was generally agreed that two years was a significant transition point from short to longer term - or as American agencies tend to term it - 'career missionaries'.²⁰ REAP International Ministries is one mission that has actually published its own definition. Mission longer than two years is defined as long-term. However,

¹⁸ Boomers generation were born between 1946 and the mid 1960's

Buster generation were born between the mid 1960's and the late 1970's

¹⁹ Judd Richard. *Do Short-Term Programmes Achieve The Purposes For Which They Were Established?* Dissertation for degree course at London Bible College 1996. p.8-9

²⁰ Global Connections seminar for monitoring adherence to the 'Code Of Best Practice' for short-term missions. London 2 March 2000.

there is a big difference between two years and two weeks! So a sub-division of the short-term mission is further defined. Up to two months is short-term and between two months and two years is defined as *medium-term*.²¹ These are the definitions that will be accepted for this dissertation.

Without over-complicating the issue, it should be mentioned that there is also a considerable difference in experience and the training required for a 6-8 week mission than there is for the typical American two-week mission. What we might call the *very* short-term mission.

4. History

In the summer of 1954 at the age of 18, Lauren Cunningham²² joined a group of Christians on a short-term mission trip to Mexico. It was on this trip that he decided to enrol in the Central Bible Institute of the Assemblies of God, in Springfield, Missouri, that Autumn.²³ In December 1960 after Bible school and completing a masters degree at the University of Southern California, he decided to start a mission aimed at sending large numbers of young people on short and longer term missions, and to call it Youth With a Mission.²⁴

George Verwer²⁵ made a similar visit to Mexico in 1957 while a student at Maryville College, New Jersey. Verwer transferred to Moody Bible Institute and the following year founded *Send The Light Inc.*²⁶ Verwer took a team to Spain in 1960, and began regular summer missions called *Operation Mobilisation* – a name that was later adopted for the whole organisation. He moved to London as a base for sending teams to mainland Europe in 1961. In the summer of 1962, fifty, mostly young people participated in the European summer programme. In the summer of 1963, the numbers rose to 300. In the

²¹ Miles John. *Doing Our Best – a short-term mission training manual*. REAP International Ministries 1995. p5.

²² Hanks Geoffrey. *60 Great Founders*. Christian Focus Publications Ltd. Fearn, Scotland 1995. p167

²³ Cunningham Loren. *Is that Really You God?* YWAM Publishing, Seattle. 1984. p26

²⁴ Cunningham Loren. *Is that Really You God?* YWAM Publishing, Seattle. 1984 p.38

²⁵ Hanks Geoffrey. *60 Great Founders*. Christian Focus Publications Ltd. Fearn, Scotland 1995. p123

²⁶ Hicks David, *Globalising Missions*. Masters degree dissertation for Columbia Bible Seminary, South Carolina. 1992. p22

same year, the first team went overland to India.²⁷ Today O.M. works in 80 countries and their summer programme takes up to 4,000 participants.²⁸ In the intervening forty years, hundreds of organisations have been formed to operate short and medium term missions. Operation Mobilisation required a minimum term of two years for workers going to India because of the distance and cost of travel. In Britain, many of the 110 mission organisations offering short-term opportunities in the 'Short-term Service Directory' are long established missions that have traditionally sent out long-term missionaries.²⁹ The long-established missions that have begun to include short-term activities must see advantages in this or they would not have done so. Issues such as using short-term missions to raise future support or long-term recruitment will be discussed in the section on 'Mission-centred aims'.

5. Biblical Examples of Short-Term Missions

One of the obvious criticisms that might be made of Short Term missions is that not much can be accomplished in the allotted time. This criticism would naturally be in the minds of those engaged in long-term missions, as the short-term opportunities first began to emerge in the early 1960s. This criticism lacks credibility when the pattern of missions in the book of Acts is considered.

The spread of the Christian Gospel in the very early days of the church, owed much to pressurised or enforced migration of the early believers because of persecution (Acts 8:1 & 4). Then Peter is pressed by God Himself into communicating the gospel to Gentiles in Acts 10. The first *voluntary* travelling for mission that we have recorded is Paul's first missionary journey, beginning in Acts 13. In most of the places that Paul and his team visited, he appears to have accomplished much in a short time. Throughout his missionary career, Paul only seems to have spent more than a few weeks in Ephesus (2 years)

²⁷ Hicks David, *Globalising Missions*. Masters degree dissertation for Columbia Bible Seminary, South Carolina. 1992. p23.

²⁸ Peter Conlan, (International Projects Director, O.M. Ships). Interview on 19 January 2000.

²⁹ *The Short-Term Service Directory*. Christian Vocations, Upper Gornal, West Midlands. 1999 edition

And Corinth (18 months) before periods of imprisonment. All of his work would be considered as short or medium-term missions today.

Roland Allen, in his own study of Paul's missionary methods - written a hundred years ago - argues that a lot can be accomplished in a short time, using local converts to overcome the language and cultural barriers.³⁰ One may use this argument in support of modern short-term missions, but Allen was not contemplating a short-term commitment by the missionaries themselves. Rather he was saying that the long-term missionary could achieve a lot in this way and move on to other places in their particular field. In today's world, communication via a translator is a well accepted practice.³¹ It can also be argued that we are increasingly faced with a similar language and cultural situation to Paul. English is rapidly becoming a universal language, spoken by large numbers of people in many countries, especially the higher educated.

It can be argued that in the first century covered by the New Testament writers, the church that faced persecution had little time to develop a long-term mission strategy. It is interesting to note that Philip, after his encounter with the Ethiopian in the desert, preaches in several places before arriving in Caesarea (Acts 8:40). He is recorded as still being there 20 years later (Acts 21:8). Even if Philip's experience was more common in the early church than indicated by Acts, it does not take away from the fact that effective missionary work was accomplished in relatively short visits.

It can be argued that the modern long-term missionary strategy is more akin to the 'evangelisation by migration' experience of the early Christians who were persecuted. Those that Peter addresses as 'The pilgrims of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia.' (1 Peter 1:1. N.K.J.V)

³⁰ Allen Roland. *Missionary Methods, St. Paul's or Ours* Erdmans, Grand Rapids 1998. p10-17. First published in 1912.

³¹ Kirby Scott H. *The Short-Term Mission Adventure*. Printing Image, Knoxville, Tennessee, 1998. p.94

6. Aims and Activities of Short and Medium-Term Mission

6.1 The Danger of Pre-Conceived Plans

One of the mistakes that can be made by short-term missions organisers, is to go to a mission situation with a pre-conceived idea of what they will do there, rather than go with an open and enquiring mind to listen to the local people and research the real needs.³² Often the host will go along with the visitors' plan out of politeness, or out of a desire not to alienate what they see as potentially for them a very advantageous and helpful relationship, regardless of how appropriate the activity is. This was certainly true in Romania and Hungary 1991 onwards. The Romanian Information service based at Southampton published in their newsletter the amazing fact in 1997, that over 500 charities (unnamed) had been set up in Britain since 1991, for the sole purpose of working in Romania, had ceased to function and millions of pounds were tied up in the frozen accounts of these charities.

The choice of activity may be solely based on the visitors' own limited knowledge of what is needed in the situation. An example of this are the many teams of young American Christians who every summer go south across the Mexican border for two weeks and invade small towns and villages to show the 'Jesus Film' and give out food and clothing.³³ They usually do this nominally in association with the local church. The non-Christian residents of these places are well used to the routine of turning up at these events, responding to the evangelistic appeal, and collecting the food and clothing

³² Bustin Gerald. A Non-dependent National Church Alive and Thriving. A paper presented to the 'Consultation on Dependency and Self-Reliance'. 19-20 November 1999, Philadelphia. Sponsored by World Mission Associates, Lancaster, Pennsylvania

³³ Johnson Rick. *North American Short-Term evangelism and Dependency in Northern Mexico*. A paper presented to the 'Consultation on Dependency and Self-Reliance'. 19-20 November 1999, Philadelphia. Sponsored by World Mission Associates, Lancaster, Pennsylvania

and sometimes money to relieve what they carefully explain to their 'new friends' is their abject poverty!

The young people go back to their churches and parents with glowing testimonies, and video evidence of the 'great things that God did through them' and the near revival that they caused!³⁴ The young people are happy, so are their church and their parents, the people who received the food and clothing are happy, perhaps even the local church who may also have received help are happy. Everyone is happy, but it is not effective evangelism nor is it effective use of resources.

If the aim of the mission trip is to implement a pre-planned agenda which suits the sending agency or church, this not a desirable aim. At worst it can be little more than a glorified adventure or tourism trip for which the supposed missionary aim is used to justify the raising of the costs from other Christians or trusts.

If on the other hand, the aim is to genuinely serve the host church or mission in tasks that they hold as valuable and helpful to their long-term aims, the mission trip is transformed into a highly valuable event for both the host and the sending agency. The lasting effects on the participants are much more likely to be positive.

³⁴ Johnson Rick. *North American Short-Term evangelism and Dependency in Northern Mexico*. A paper presented to the 'Consultation on Dependency and Self-Reliance'. 19-20 November 1999, Philadelphia. Sponsored by World Mission Associates, Lancaster, Pennsylvania

6.2 Effective Research

One of the most important factors in achieving effectiveness for short-term missions is thorough research.³⁵ Potential venues for short-term missions need to be visited by a research worker, ideally between 6-9 months before the mission to give the local church time to prepare for the visit. The researcher needs to be a competent officer of the mission agency or a trusted associate of the agency - this may be a long-term missionary in the area. There are situations when a personal visit may not be necessary and correspondence is sufficient. For example, the host is already a long-term missionary from the sending agency and is well versed on the requirements and capabilities of the short-term workers or the host has successfully received short-term workers on more than two occasions before and are likewise familiar with their requirements, capabilities and limitations.

Below is a list of requirements published by REAP International Ministries as guidelines for their research workers when visiting a potential venue for a short-term building team.³⁶ Some answers to the questions will be factual, and some will be the subjective opinion of the researcher. Therefore the experience of the researcher and the confidence the sending agency has in their judgement is very important.

1. Does the local host leadership seem reliable and honest?
2. Is the proposed project appropriate to the aims of the sending mission?³⁷
3. Is the project within the reasonable capabilities of the team?
4. If the project is not completed, are the hosts capable of completing it?
5. Are the building materials available locally?
6. Do the plans have local planning permission?
7. Are there local builders to assist the team?
8. What contribution will the host church/mission make?

³⁵ Peterson Rev. Roger. *Short-Term Missions, Are They Worth The Time and Money?*. STEM Ministries 1993. P29

³⁶ *Guidelines for Research Workers*. REAP International Ministries 1996.

³⁷ Fawset Graham. *Ad-mission, The Briefing and Debriefing of Teams of Missionaries and Aid Workers*. YWAM, Harpenden, 1999. P56

9. Is there suitable accommodation for the team?
10. Are there adequate toilet and washing facilities?
11. Where will the team's clothes be washed?
12. What is the local medical provision?
13. Where will the team cook and eat?
14. Where will the team get clean water?
15. Is their situation hygienic enough?
16. What is the best evacuation route?
17. What is the local security situation?

The above set of criteria are designed for a building team. If the team had a different activity the criteria researched would need to reflect that. For example, if the aim was evangelism, the following questions may need to be researched.

1. Has the local church requested the team?
2. Has the local church stated the type of evangelism they would like the team to do?
3. Will the local Christians be working with the team?
4. Will the team be under local leadership?
5. What evangelism had been done in the area before, either by the local Christians or by visiting teams?
6. Was there any effective follow-up to previous work?
7. How effective was previous evangelism?
8. Does the local church have experienced translators?
9. Will local leaders be available to brief the team?
10. What is the attitude of the local authorities to visiting teams?

It is an essential part of good research, to approach the host church or mission with an open mind,³⁸ asking what are the needs, and in what way can

³⁸ Bush Luis. The Long and short of Mission Terms. An article for the magazine 'Mission Frontiers. Published by USCWM 3/2/00. (faxed from USA with no page reference)

the team best serve the host in their work. Then a plan for the team's activity can be negotiated according to the team's abilities, experience and resources.³⁹

There is no doubt that some short-term workers are sent on missions without adequate research. Unfortunately the results of such mission are not documented or published if anything goes wrong. People only want to tell the successful stories. Hence the accounts of failure and inadequacy are almost always anecdotal. Lack of effective research can result in frustration and disappointment all round and a waste of time and money. The longer-term negative emotional and psychological effects on the worker can be very serious.⁴⁰ When a project is well researched and well planned, the results can be very beneficial to all parties. Good research will frequently be the main difference between the trip being a success or a failure. In 1992 REAP International Ministries were offered a large amount of aid for Romanian churches. The transport on a large truck was already arranged and paid for. All REAP had to do was name the places for it to be delivered to. It seemed like a wonderful opportunity. REAP asked the donors to wait a few weeks for the results of a research trip the REAP was undertaking with their co-workers in Romania. The research worker asked all the contacts that he was visiting if they wanted some of the offered aid. The answer from them all was negative. One of the main reasons given was that aid already delivered had caused so much argument and jealousy, they did not want more. The truck of aid was reluctantly declined. In this example, research uncovered a situation that most agencies were ignorant of, at a time when it was broadly assumed that Romanian churches wanted lots of practical aid of this type.

³⁹ Interview: Forward David. Author of *Essential guide to the Short-Term Mission Trip* and Co-ordinator of short-term missions for Faith Presbyterian Church, Stokes, New Jersey.

⁴⁰ Fawsett Graham. *Ad-mission, The Briefing and Debriefing of Teams of Missionaries and Aid Workers*. YWAM Harpenden 1999. p108-120

6.3 Evangelism

Many short-term mission trips are aimed purely at evangelism. This was and is certainly true of large evangelism-based organisations such as Operation Mobilisation, Youth With a Mission, Campus Crusade, Youth For Christ and Scripture Union. This aim often has two main purposes. One is the actual conversions resulting from the evangelism and the other is the training and discipling affect on the participants. George Verwer in the early years of Operation Mobilisation (1960-1970) would often state publicly that O.M. was a training organisation. O.M. certainly regards this still as a major aim, but clearly in their policy publications, world evangelism is at the head of their lists of aims and values.⁴¹

With this aim, short-term missions are at their most vulnerable to criticism. It is in the area of cross-cultural evangelistic mission, which is traditionally the main thrust of mission, that the short-term programme can be most severely criticised. Most vulnerable of all are the very short two-week long missions so common among North American churches and agencies. This dissertation makes no attempt to defend the two-week cross-cultural evangelistic mission using virtually untrained high school students. Their main redeeming features are some discipling and educational benefits for the young participants.

6.4 Disadvantages of the short-term foreign evangelistic mission.

1. Usually little or no knowledge of the local language.
2. No understanding of local culture and customs.
3. Cultures with a strong hospitality culture and natural respect of foreigners will respond to visitors out of politeness and respect rather than genuine interest in the message.
4. Responses may be for alternative reasons such as wanting a foreign friend or the possibility of financial gain.

⁴¹ Operation Mobilisation International Policy Manual. (authors not accredited) O.M. Publications. Carlisle. p5-6.

5. Response may be out of a desire to learn English.
6. Relationships cannot be pursued easily after the end of the trip.
7. Mistakes made by the visitors can have serious negative repercussions for the local host after the mission is over.
8. As visitors, they just do not know often what is a genuine response and what is not.

Martin Goldsmith challenges those considering short-term work to ask whether God may be calling them long-term. He sees the barriers of language and ignorance of local culture as serious obstacles to short-term missionaries ever being effective communicators of the Gospel.⁴² He concedes that specialist workers such as builders, disaster recovery workers and medical staff, especially to cover the long-term workers who are going on furlough,⁴³ have a role to play.

Goldsmith believes that in most situations 'The tasks of evangelism and teaching God's church, must largely be fulfilled by full-time missionaries with their specialist training and knowledge of the culture and language. They alone have the time and freedom of movement which are needed for this work'.⁴⁴ He emphasises that this is particularly true in the Islamic world, where it is necessary to build a relationship of trust with local people to whom the missionary is witnessing his faith.⁴⁵ It is doubtful that Verwer and Cunningham would disagree with Goldsmith's assessment. This is evidenced by the fact that in both their organisations there has been a long-standing policy of working with and in support of the career missionary or local church. They have recruited their own long-term missionaries via their short programmes and these have worked as church-planting workers.⁴⁶

⁴² Goldsmith Martin. *Don't Just Stand There*. Inter-Varsity Press, Leicester 1976. p109

⁴³ *Ibid* p110

⁴⁴ *Ibid* p111

⁴⁵ Goldsmith Martin. *Islam and Christian Witness*. O.M. Publishing, Bromley. 1991. p108-113

⁴⁶ Interviews with Peter Conlan and George Verwer.

Martin Goldsmith highlights the difficulty of understanding the customs and cultures that are so radically different to those they are familiar with. The short-term and non-professional missionary are at a serious disadvantage trying to overcome the cultural barriers.⁴⁷ Griffiths points out that in some eastern cultures such as Japan, there is a strong attachment to 'Your teacher' almost a *guru* attitude to the missionary that led you to conversion. This does not easily transfer to a new person. Many converts fall away if their missionary is replaced.⁴⁸ This has serious implications for short-term evangelism in these cultures.

6.5 Advantages of the short-term foreign evangelistic mission

1. Manpower; the number of workers that a local church or mission may want for a short period for an evangelistic event or special purpose can often be supplied by an incoming group. Large-scale literature distribution is an example of this.
2. The enthusiasm of the short-term workers can be an encouragement and an example to the local Christians.
3. The '*novelty effect*' of western young people visiting, will often draw in local people out of curiosity and thus bring them within reach of the message that the local church are promoting. Radstock Ministries working with churches in Ukraine, in the ten years that they have had freedom to do this, have used teams of westerners to take advantage of this fact.⁴⁹

O.M. and YWAM quickly realised that the more effective method was to engage teams in support of longer-term teams, long-term missionaries or local churches, whose aims were church planting⁵⁰. So that virtually all O.M.

⁴⁷ Goldsmith Martin. *Don't Just Stand There*. Inter-Varsity Press, Leicester 1976 103-115

⁴⁸ Griffiths Michael. *Take Off Your Shoes*. O.M.F. London 1971. p101

⁴⁹ Interview with Jill Kingston, Ukraine coordinator for Radstock ministries. 1995

⁵⁰ Interview with Peter Conlan. International Projects Director, O.M. Ships. 19 January 2000.

evangelism is now conducted in this way.⁵¹ Greg Livingstone makes a strong point that it is typical for O.M. to put a large team of 20 members working alongside a career missionary for a summer. 'This team would usually find more interested people than the missionary would ferret out in five years. The missionary could then give all his time to following up those interested in the gospel.'⁵²

Lack of planning and preparation may have led to poor and ineffective presentation of the message. Training in how to speak to groups or tell their own experience one-to-one will significantly increase the effectiveness of the participants.⁵³ Unfortunately, this type of preparation is sometimes lacking.

David Forward has found that *Vacation Bible Schools* have been the most effective form of evangelism for the teams he has led.⁵⁴ The nature of this activity gives a much longer contact between the team members and the people they are seeking to evangelise. This enables friendships to form and a much fuller and considered explanation of the Christian message to be communicated.

Campus Crusade (known as Agape in Europe) benefit in their evangelism from the novelty effect, the desire to learn English and the desire to befriend a westerner in their one-to-one evangelism in universities and colleges in many parts of the world. In this work the apparent *disadvantages* of not knowing the local language, or culture, and attracting listeners for the wrong motives, have often been turned to an *advantage*.⁵⁵

⁵¹ Interview with George Verwer, International co-ordinator of O.M. January 2000.

⁵² Livingstone Greg. *Does it Work?*. A chapter for *Stepping Out, A Guide to Short-Term Missions*. YWAM Publishing. Seattle 1992p.24

⁵³ Forward David. *The Essential Guide to the Short-Term Mission Trip*. Moody Press, Chicago 1998. p.116

⁵⁴ Interview: Forward David. Author of 'Essential guide to the Short-Term Mission Trip' and Co-ordinator of short-term missions for Faith Presbyterian Church, Stokes, New Jersey.

⁵⁵ Hawthorne Stephen. 'Maximum Short-Term Mission' a chapter in *Stepping Out* YWAM Publishing. Seattle. 1992P.86

Specialist teams such as music, mime and drama teams have been able to attract audiences with the additional aim of sharing the Christian message either with a group or individuals. Again, if this is done under the supervision of the long-term local ministry, it can be an effective means of reaching listeners that is not usually open to the local church or mission. This gives opportunity for people with such skills that they might be using regularly at home, to be effective in a mission situation. Douglas Millham encourages those thinking of short-term missions, in making their initial investigations into where they might serve, to first consider what skills they have to offer.⁵⁶

There is a danger that short-term evangelism can be to the detriment of the local church and its relationships with the local community in countries that are predominately of another religion such as Islam or Hinduism. Some such countries are effectively closed to such mission work, but there are other countries, such as Pakistan and India, that will tolerate a Christian presence, but the local Christians need to be sensitive and often walk a tightrope in their local relationships.⁵⁷ A legacy of resentment and damage to relationships that have been carefully built up over years can be left behind by the team. Only by working at the request of the local church and under their guidance and leadership can this be avoided. Michael Nazir Ali⁵⁸ makes a plea for short-term mission agencies working in places like Pakistan, to first to establish a relationship with the national church before engaging in evangelism. Such independent work is often carried out in an unwise manner to the detriment of the established church. He deplores agencies that have a 'lets do it and get thrown out' attitude. At the same time he applauds short-term agencies that have partnered with the local church and given them encouragement.⁵⁹ On the positive side, many churches in these difficult situations consider the visit of such a team as positive support for them from outside. It shows that

⁵⁶ Millham Douglas. 'A Call for Ordinary People' a chapter in *Stepping Out* YWAM Publishing. Seattle. 1992 P.19

⁵⁷ Livingstone Greg. *Planting Churches in Muslim Cities*. Baker Book House Co. Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1993. p66-68.

⁵⁸ Former Provost of Lahore Cathedral and later Bishop of Raiwind, Pakistan.

⁵⁹ Nazir Ali Michael. *Frontiers in Muslim-Christian Encounter*. Regnum Books, Oxford, 1987. p100-101.

they are not as isolated as the local (often hostile) community may think. They sometimes consider the team's visit as a 'litmus test' of their own commitment, by being prepared to stand with the team and openly evangelise, not letting fear of the consequences stop them from being bold. Short-term missions have also had an important role in some countries in pushing open previously closed doors, such as Russia.⁶⁰ Getting the balance right between these two approaches is difficult and complicated. All one can say is that such evangelistic work must only ever be undertaken after careful research and consideration of all the relevant factors.

Ralph Winter shows that there are still over 2 billion people in the world who will not hear the gospel unless someone crosses the cultural and language gap to reach them.⁶¹ Should we abandon the less effective mission work just to leave the most effective in place? The question is, will the task ever be accomplished without the vast manpower that short-term missions represent? The answer must be that the church should use all means at its disposal. To put the best possible training in place for the short-term evangelistic mission worker and to use those workers in support of and under the control of the long-term missionary or local church.

One may argue that the best people to evangelise are the local people. After all they know the language and the culture far better than the missionaries. This is certainly a major development in countries such as South Korea, Brazil and Nigeria, where the church has grown rapidly in recent years. Some would say that the foreign missionary's work is done in many places. Wagner strongly opposes this view. He finds it an anomaly that missionaries regard themselves as better than the local church at doing just about everything else, except evangelism.⁶² There is still a call and a need for the church-planting missionary. Wagner's enthusiasm for mission by every means stands in contrast to Griffiths and Goldsmith's reservation about short-term work.

⁶⁰ Elaine Rhoton. *The Doulos Story*. O.M. Publishing, Carlisle, 1993. p316-318

⁶¹ Winter Ralph. *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*. William Carey Library, Pasadena, California. 1983. p293

⁶² Peter Wagner. *Church/Mission Tensions Today*. Moody Press, Chicago. 1972. p223

Wagner cites the work of city evangelists such as Carlos Annacodia⁶³ and Omar Cabrera in Argentina as good examples of effective short-term evangelism.⁶⁴

6.6 Practical and Humanitarian Assistance

If the aim of the short-term mission trip is a practical project, a team can be highly effective. This is particularly true if the team contains skilled specialists or tradesmen. The practical work is rarely the sole activity of the team. It will occupy most of the day, but in the evenings and weekends the team will engage in other ministry and fellowship with the local church members, thus building the relationships and adding to the overall experience of the team and their hosts.

The two-week teams from North America to Latin America often engage in practical work, but the shortness of the trip limits the amount of useful work that can be done.⁶⁵ This length of mission might even be considered by many to be a gesture of friendship to the local host and has value in that. The short two-week trip does seem to dominate the north American culture. This is because annual holidays in North America are usually only two or three weeks as opposed to the longer holidays in Europe.

University students do have more time in their summer vacation, and the whole short-term mission idea has developed on the back of the student summer availability. In North America the desire to participate in summer missions has always battled with the need for many students to work and earn money during the vacation. This problem is increasingly so in Britain too since the financial support for students from the government has been reducing dramatically over recent years. In Britain this may well lead to a serious reduction in the number of candidates coming forward.

⁶³ Wagner Peter. *Warfare Prayer*. Monarch Publications, Tunbridge Wells 1993. p25

⁶⁴ Wagner Peter. *Territorial Spirits*. Sovereign World Ltd. Chichester, U.K. 1991. p46.

⁶⁵ Interview with Matthew Spina, youth pastor, Ashland Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Vorhees, New Jersey, USA. November 1999

Practical teams of 2-3 weeks can be very effective if there is a high skill content in the team.⁶⁶ This was demonstrated by the many teams of skilled workers that went to eastern European countries in the immediate aftermath of the fall of the various Communist regimes there. The appalling conditions in the orphanages, hospitals and mental institutions in these countries motivated many efforts to help the situation. If enough funds and equipment could be raised, a team of 6 -10 skilled workers highly motivated, demonstrated that they could transform the kitchens, toilets, showers, plumbing and electrical supply of many of these sad institutions.

The majority of the early teams to eastern Europe were from ordinary churches. For most it was a short-term response to the situation and within three years the number of teams travelling east reduced to a fraction of what it was to start with. At the Easter 1991 services at the *Crestin Dupa Evanghelie* church in Craiova, Romania, there were about 10 foreign visitors. In 1994 at Easter there was only one visiting speaker. Titi Vieru, the church secretary commented on how the amount of visitors had dropped in four years. The publicity given to the conditions in Romania and Albania on television was the key factor in motivating the efforts to help. The sad fact is that once a situation is no longer on the television in the West, the Christian response reduces dramatically! This raises questions about where the Western church is receiving its motivation from. Those who continue to work in Romania today are made up mainly of three types of organisation.

1) Longer established missions, who in response to the need have added this type of practical ministry to their activities. Example: The Romanian Missionary Society and the European Christian Mission.

2) A relatively small number of churches who have kept up their links and the practical help that they offer. This is particularly true if that church sent out missionaries to those countries on a longer-term basis. Example: Knowle

⁶⁶ STEM Ministries. Team Training Manual. STEM Ministries, Minneapolis, 1997. p.19

Parish Church, West Midlands, still raising money and sending teams and equipment eight years after their first involvement.

3) New organisations that began as an initial response but then developed into a long-term ministry, registering their own charities and raising funds for the work. Examples of this are 'Romania Link' and 'Blythswood'

More effective in using the less skilled volunteers are the teams that go for 5-8 weeks. This type of team is popular with British mission organisations. Many long-established British missions have added this type of practical team work to their activities.⁶⁷ The teams are most effective if they have at least one skilled member, usually a builder, who can supervise the rest of the volunteers. These teams will either do a project on their own, or more commonly work in partnership with some of the local church members. These teams can put up a simple structure for a church building, school classroom or orphanage accommodation in 5-8 weeks. Often the building does not get completed by the team, but is far enough advanced to be easily completed by the local partners.

There are many other types of practical help that are offered by mission agencies. To examine them all adequately and assess their effectiveness would require a separate study. Below is a list of the main areas of practical work carried out by short or medium-term mission participants overseas.⁶⁸

Construction	Administration	Art/craft
Agriculture	Finance	Computers
Food distribution	Mechanical work	Medical
Maintenance	Horticulture	

⁶⁷ See appendix 2, British missions offering practical short-term mission opportunities.

⁶⁸ Short-Term Service Directory. Christian Vocations, Lower Gornal, West Midlands. 1999.

6.7 Assessment of Practical and Humanitarian Assistance.

It is hard to be critical of the practical aims and activities. It is an ideal activity for a short or medium-term team or individuals. This is with the proviso that the activity has been well researched and the team properly prepared. Many Christians want to make more than a financial contribution to helping the overwhelming problems of poverty and disaster relief. They regard it as a fundamental Christian duty to do so. A missionary in The Republic of Congo once said 'An empty stomach has no ears'.⁶⁹ Short-term practical missions give ordinary Christians the opportunity to respond personally to this call. To become what some have called 'A world Christian'.⁷⁰

Michael Griffiths, in some of his more recent writing, comes out in favour of Christians with professional skills, using the skills to enter restricted countries in what he calls '*creative access*'.⁷¹ He also supports the '*Short-term visitor*' to support long-term mission locations with particular expertise.⁷²

Accomplishing practical projects in a short time, with highly motivated voluntary personnel, is a strength of the western culture, which we can employ to serve in other cultures that are more family and hospitality based. The short-term teams usually bring with them all or part of the necessary finance to accomplish the practical task. This provides the host with buildings and facilities that are very valuable to them, which they otherwise would not have. The satisfaction level of the visiting volunteers is high because they know that their work will be useful and appreciated long after they have gone home. Further support for the hosts is often generated by the team members and their churches after their return home, what might be described as 'secondary giving'. Sometimes long-lasting relationships are formed as a result of the trip, to the benefit of both parties.

⁶⁹ Forward David. *Essential Guide to the Short-Term Mission Trip*. Moody Press.1998. p.19

⁷⁰ Gaukroger Stephen. *Why Bother With Mission?* Inter Varsity Press. Leicester 1996.p11-29

⁷¹ Griffiths Michael. *A Task Unfinished*. Monarch Publications, Crowborough, East Sussex. 1996. p21

⁷² *Ibid.* p23.

One criticism sometimes made of the mission trip with practical aims is that the activity is taking away jobs from local people. This assumes that the practical work would be done by local workmen, employed by the hosts, if the team didn't come. Whilst this may be valid in a small number of situations, it is not so in the vast majority. The work is only made possible by the activity and funds raised by the team. An example of this is Bethel Church, Ndola, Zambia. They purchased a plot of land for a new building and were unable to do anything with it for several years until a short-term team from REAP International Ministries came and constructed the building. The team raised the money and completed most of the building in 1996. The church then completed it after the team departed. It is sometimes said that the missions should just send the equivalent amount of money for the hosts to accomplish the task. This assumes that the money would be available to the mission even if the team was not recruited and sent. This however, is not the real situation. The team members only raise the money *because* they are going personally on the mission trip. To assume that you could ask individuals to raise the money and donate it instead of going is idealistic in the extreme, it just would not happen.

A more relevant criticism is that the short-term mission activity creates or perpetuates *dependency* in the minds of the hosts.⁷³ This is a danger faced by all mission activity and not just by the short or medium-term work.

A further criticism that could be made is that the short-term fund-raising activities are diverting finances away from long-term mission work.⁷⁴ This criticism carries with it the assumption that long-term mission work is always more valid than short-term mission and therefore should take priority.

It is not a universal view that skilled specialists can be an effective aid to local churches and permanent missionary work. Michael Griffiths believes that the

⁷³ Schwartz Glenn. *Dependency Among Mission-Established Institutions: Exploring the Issues*. World Mission Associates, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, 1996.

⁷⁴ Kirby Scott H. *The Short-Term Mission Adventure*. Printing Image, Knoxville, Tennessee, 1998 p36

value of non-professional missionaries has been greatly exaggerated. The problem of trying to do two jobs is immense.⁷⁵ The doctor working in a third world situation will have great demands on his time and energy, with little left over for church planting. They are often limited to practical witness and some personal contact. Many consider this as a valid activity in its own right.

The one area in which Griffiths concedes that the 'non-professional' missionary has a role to play is in countries not open to the professional missionary, such as Islamic countries.⁷⁶ Griffiths points out that the scriptural examples of Christ and the early church show a compelling mandate for mission activity to include social action and economic development.⁷⁷ Goldsmith agrees with this view. Whilst believing that the career missionary is the best way for mission to be effective, he concedes that it is legitimate for skilled Christians such as doctors and engineers to work in countries that restrict Christian work. Showing the love of Christ in a practical way is a useful alternative to the career missionary.⁷⁸

Shepherd, somewhat controversially questions the whole concept of a humanitarian witness, that evangelising and social action are not one and the same thing. Evangelisation is the primary activity of mission and that social action is very much a secondary activity.⁷⁹ He cites Beyerhaus in support of his view, 'Mission occurs when - and only when - it is directed towards putting man's existence, through a conscious decision of faith.....The planting and growth of the church as the body of Christ in the world remains the primary goal of mission.'⁸⁰

The need for social action in response to the urbanisation of vast populations who live in squalor in vast shanty towns on the edges of large third world

⁷⁵ Griffiths Michael. *Give Up Your Small Ambitions*. Inter Varsity Press 1978. p116-119

⁷⁶ *ibid.* P118

⁷⁷ Griffiths Michael. *Shaking the Sleeping Beauty*. Inter-Varsity Press. Leicester, 1980 p78-84

⁷⁸ Goldsmith Martin. *Islam and Christian Witness*. O.M. Publishing 1991. p112 & 108-113.

⁷⁹ Shepherd J.F. *Is the Church Really Necessary*. A chapter for *Church/Mission Tensions Today*. Ed. By Peter Wagner, Moody Press, Chicago. 1972. p30

⁸⁰ *Ibid* p31.

cities, is well beyond the scope of existing mission agencies.⁸¹ The need for armies of short-term workers, preferably with practical skills is hard to dismiss.

6.8 Preaching and Teaching

Vacation Bible schools, which might be included under this heading have already been mentioned under evangelism. It needs to be noted that the vacation Bible school is also a means of teaching the Christians.

The short-term preaching/teaching trip is as old as Christianity itself. When is an itinerant preaching tour a short-term mission? It is worth noting though, that many modern-day short-term mission trips come about as a result of a leader or pastor going first to preach. The preaching trip takes on a secondary role as a research trip that initiates a visit by others, usually ordinary church members. The relatively small cost of air fares in today's western economy has facilitated a great increase in the number of such trips.

Preachers are well received in most mission situations. The early missionary and colonial legacies have created a myth that the white man is automatically a good preacher worth listening to. Even young people who are relatively new and untutored in the Christian faith are given a platform to share the little they have. Claire Wright went to work in Mozambique in her capacity as a physiotherapist in 1993. In her first letter back to the agency director who sent her there she wrote, 'I came here as a physiotherapist, but today I preached to a thousand people!'⁸² This is often a benefit to the young person, but not automatically of value to the congregation. This uncritical attitude has opened the door to poor teaching and the spread of cults.

This whole situation perpetuates cultural arrogance on the part of westerners.⁸³ The idea that we are superior in most of what we do and in our culture, is deeply ingrained into the psyche of westerners. *From-the-west-to-*

⁸¹ Greenway Roger. *Urbanisation and Missions*, a chapter in *Crucial Issues in Missions Tomorrow*, Ed. Donald McGavran. Moody Press, Chicago 1972. p227

⁸² Letter to the director of REAP International ministries.

⁸³ STEM Ministries. Team Training Manual. STEM Ministries, Minneapolis, 1997. p16

the-rest is seen as the natural order of things. This distortion of relationship is usually encouraged by many host locations who often accept this situation as normal.⁸⁴

There are still too few mission agencies or churches that will invest in bringing good preaching and teaching ministry to the home churches from abroad. In eastern Europe, the churches have produced some excellent teachers such as Josif Tson who tours extensively in Britain and America, and a whole generation of Christians who persevered in their faith under repressive Communist regimes. The speed with which large numbers of preachers rushed into eastern Europe when the doors opened with the attitude that they were there to teach rather than learn, shows the extent of the cultural arrogance that we in the west often suffer from.

The missionary effort of the west is currently being eclipsed by the churches of former missionary locations. Examples of these are South Korea, Brazil, Philippines and Argentina.⁸⁵ These will soon be added to by other nations from Africa and South America. The churches of eastern Europe are taking the Christian message to places like Siberia. Oradea Bible College, in Romania, regularly sends out short-term mission teams of students each summer to Siberia.

It has always been a feature of mission work that the sending church, which may be a single congregation, or a denominational mission, expects their missionaries to plant churches in their own doctrinal and structural image. As Newbigin puts it 'Their business is to impose on younger churches the ethical standards laid down by the sending churches as an essential part of their work.'⁸⁶ The desire of some churches or denominations to reproduce only in

⁸⁴ Fawset Graham. *Ad-mission, The Briefing and Debriefing of Teams of Missionaries and Aid Workers*. YWAM, Harpenden, 1999. p30-31

⁸⁵ Taylor William D. *Too Valuable To Lose*. William Carey Library, Pasadena 1997. p127-154.

⁸⁶ Newbigin Lesslie *The Open Secret*. Erdmans, Grand Rapids, 1978. p146

their own image is self-gratifying and takes no account of cultural or ethnic consideration.

Inviting participants of short-term mission teams to preach is often an act of hospitality by the hosts. A mark of respect for the visitor more than a belief that their preaching is more profound or relevant to the needs of the congregation. The more experienced preacher, such as a pastor or recognised Bible teacher from the west, does have a valuable teaching role. However, he or she needs cultural briefing before embarking on such trips.

6.9 Prayer

Perhaps surprisingly, 26 agencies in the Short-Term Service Directory list prayer among their short-term activities.⁸⁷ One would think that *all* Christian short-term workers would engage in prayer for the location that they were working in. One could also presume that the agency would wish that these workers would pray for the location long-term.

Only an examination of the agency's literature reveals what is meant by this entry in the Short-Term Service Directory. Some agencies organise trips into countries where open Christian work is not permitted, purely so that the team can pray *in the situation*. Others list prayer as an activity included with other activities. This is rather confusing because as already mentioned, presumably all short-term teams pray.

As an example, YWAM lists 'Prayer Treks' in northern China⁸⁸. Agencies such as Arab World Ministries⁸⁹ will organise this type of trip to North African countries such as Morocco and Tunisia. It is seen as valuable that the prayer takes place *in the country* that is the subject of the prayer. Is there particular value in *praying in the country* as opposed to praying for that country from

⁸⁷ Short-Term Service Directory. Christian Vocations, Lower Gornal, West Midlands. 1999. p101.

⁸⁸ YWAM publicity *Global Outreach 2000*.

⁸⁹ Arab World Ministries publicity *Go Grow 2000*

home?⁹⁰ Is the prayer more powerful or effective because of the physical location of the supplicant?⁹¹ No doubt the educational, and inspirational aspects of being in the location are helpful when praying.⁹² Also, after returning from the location, the participants are more likely to continue to pray for the people and places that they have first hand knowledge of. They also become a source of information to others in their churches who might then pray.

The question of whether the prayers are more effective just because they are prayed on location is a more difficult question. It is difficult to make a case from the scriptures for *location prayers* being more effective. The whole emphasis of prayer in the scriptures is that you can affect situations at a distance. The Apostle Paul several times writes to distant churches saying that he is praying for them.

Peter Wagner since 1990 has given great emphasis to spiritual warfare and combating 'Territorial spirits'⁹³ He has devoted a whole book to the subject.⁹⁴ It can be argued that if demonic spirits control certain areas, then it is more effective to confront them by prayer in the location, given that demons from the evidence in scripture are neither omnipresent or omniscient. Whether the young participants that tend to make up prayer teams have the spiritual maturity and experience to engage in this type of activity is another area of doubt.⁹⁵

Prayers are made more effective by the supplicants personal spirituality and a discerned knowledge of God's will to fuel the prayer. The mission organisers might make an argument from experience. It is a great assistance to

⁹⁰ Hawthorne Steve and Kendrick Graham. *Prayer Walking*. Creation House, Florida. 1993. p12-13

⁹¹ Munger Robert. *Prayer Power - Short-Term prayer with long-Term Effect*. A chapter for *Stepping Out, A Guide to Short-Term Missions*. YWAM Publishing. Seattle 1992 p129-132

⁹² Livingstone Greg. *Does it Work?*. A chapter for *Stepping Out, A Guide to Short-Term Missions*. YWAM Publishing. Seattle 1992p.25

⁹³ **Wagner Peter**. *Warfare Prayer*. Monarch Publications, Tunbridge Wells 1993, Introduction.

⁹⁴ Wagner Peter. *Territorial Spirits*. Sovereign World Ltd. Chichester, U.K. 1991.

⁹⁵ Wagner Peter. *Prayer Shield*. Monarch Publications, Crowborough, U.K. 1992. p146-161

motivation for prayer if the pray-ers are actually in the country experiencing the situation that they are praying for. Concentrated prayer based on first-hand knowledge is easier to motivate in this way, compared with trying to motivate the same people to pray back home if they never went. So as a means of generating prayer and knowledge of the target country, this type of mission achieves its aim.

7. Agency-Centred Aims

Whether agency-centred or agency-beneficial aims are legitimate reasons for employing short-term mission programmes, is a very subjective and perhaps even emotive discussion. The list of priorities and aims of each agency or church would will differ with the general aims and history of the agency or church.⁹⁶ The early organisations such as YWAM⁹⁷ and OM⁹⁸ clearly had evangelism as the major emphasis or aim⁹⁹. However, the Christian training or discipleship aspects of the activity had clear benefits for the participants. YWAM's most popular programme is called a Discipleship Training School (DTS) which is three months of training followed by two or three months of field evangelism. The training is not just for the immediate evangelism, but emphasises a lifetime of commitment to world evangelism.¹⁰⁰

The early short-term mission programmes organised by these agencies and others that followed their example, were often criticised as shallow, inept and sometimes counterproductive. Goldsmith was one missionary educator who spoke out against the short-term idea.¹⁰¹ Michael Griffiths was among the more prominent educators who renewed the call to traditional full-time career missionary work.¹⁰² Lack of the language and knowledge of the culture were

⁹⁶ Judd Richard. *Do Short-Term Programmes Achieve The Purposes For Which They Were Established?* Dissertation for degree course at London Bible College 1996. P.19

⁹⁷ Cunningham Loren. *Is that Really You God?* YWAM Publishing, Seattle. 1984. p36-40

⁹⁸ Hicks David. *Globalising Missions, a case study of Operation Mobilisation.* Editorial Unilit, Miami 1994. p9-12.

⁹⁹ Verwer George. *Come Live Die.* Hodder and Stoughton, London 1972. P13-16

¹⁰⁰ Singlehurst Laurence. *Advance.* YWAM magazine 27 January 2000. p.3

¹⁰¹ Goldsmith Martin. *Don't Just Stand There.* Inter-Varsity Press, Leicester 1976. p111

¹⁰² Griffiths Michael. *Give Up Your Small Ambitions.* Inter Varsity Press 1978

cited - sometimes legitimately - as reasons why the short-term agencies should leave the job to the 'professionals' in the form of career missionaries.

By the mid 1970's it was clear that short-term was here to stay, it was growing and in fact was achieving some remarkable success in terms of church planting and new converts.¹⁰³

The next major development was the converging of two developing trends. First the short-term mission agencies began to establish long-term activities that were in turn supported by the short-term activities of the same agencies.¹⁰⁴

An early example of this was O.M. establishing a long-term team in France in 1967, which has always been one of their major short-term targets. Places like India and the Middle East needed long-term teams in place because of the distance from the home bases.

Second it is possible that observing this trend was influential in the decision of the traditional long-term agencies to join the 'band-wagon' and begin offering short-term opportunities to serve, usually alongside and in support of their long-term workers. However, this convergence of method, did not and still does not mean a convergence of a *priority of aims*. An influencing factor may have been the fact that many of the early short-term mission participants were now coming through into long-term service with traditional agencies and were increasingly in a position to influence mission policy. Some even established their own agencies.¹⁰⁵ Examples are Greg Livingstone establishing Frontiers, Ron George - People International and George Miley, the Antioch Network.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ Hicks David. *Globalising Missions, a case study of Operation Mobilisation*. Editorial Unilit, Miami 1994. p11,25 & 32.

¹⁰⁴ Interview with Peter Conlan 19 January 2000. Peter Conlan is International Projects Coordinator for O.M. He has been working with O.M. since 1966.

¹⁰⁵ Hicks David. *Globalising Missions, a case study of Operation Mobilisation*. Editorial Unilit, Miami 1994. p32

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. p30-32

Richard Judd (a missions lecturer at London Bible College) conducted an interesting survey of reasons why some mission agencies established their short-term programmes.¹⁰⁷

Table 2

REASONS FOR ESTABLISHING SHORT-TERM MISSIONS	Number of agencies (max. 15)
To allow people to experience cross-cultural mission in order to engender some form of future commitment.	12
To allow people to make a contribution to the task of world evangelism.	9
As a recruitment tool.	8
People want experience.	4
Raise the profile of the agency with Christians	2
To allow those who do not want to go long-term to assist in world evangelism.	1

Although the sample in Judd's study is small, it is very representative and therefore valuable. He shows that the three main stated motivations of the agencies are:

- 1) To engender future financial and prayer support
- 2) To allow people to make a contribution to the task of world evangelism
- 3) To recruit long-term workers.

In this section, aims 1 and 3 will be considered. Aim 2 will be dealt with under 'Participant-centred aims'.

Taken as a whole, the survey shows a dominance of mission-centred motives. The surprising omission from the list is the discipleship and personal growth

¹⁰⁷ Judd Richard. *Do Short-Term Programmes Achieve The Purposes For Which They Were Established?* Dissertation for degree course at London Bible College 1996. p.19

factors that predominate in the motives of the participants.¹⁰⁸ Judd's research shows the remarkable differences between the participants' motives (see table 5) and those of the agencies (see table 2).

Interest-raising, long-term recruitment and funds-generating motives are obviously legitimate reasons in the eyes of the missions themselves for having short-term programmes. Short-term programmes are being *used* in the interests of the agencies. Few would argue that raising informed and enthusiastic supporters is an undesirable thing. The participant has been and seen the work first-hand and knows how their financial support will be used. They can also become useful advocates for that particular agency. The STEM research shows that short-term missions are more successful at raising future local representatives of the agency than future missionaries¹⁰⁹.

Agencies offering short-term programmes can be categorised under three headings:

- 1) Long-standing traditional agencies that have added short-term programmes to their long-term work, often in the same locations as the long-term workers. (see appendix 3 for a list of examples)
- 2) Newer agencies (established since 1980) that have built in short-term programmes from the beginning.
- 3) Agencies that were established as short-term agencies, even though they have retained a core of long-term workers that *facilitate* the short-term programmes.

It may have been that the obvious and growing success of early short-term mission agencies like YWAM, OM, Agape, Latin Link and International Teams, has been an important factor in both the long-established mission agencies adding short-term opportunities, and the establishment of so many newer agencies that have majored on short-term programmes or agencies that have them built in as an integral part of their operating philosophy.

¹⁰⁸ Judd Richard. *Do Short-Term Programmes Achieve The Purposes For Which They Were Established?* Dissertation for degree course at London Bible College 1996. p16

¹⁰⁹ Peterson T. & Peterson R. *Is Short-Term Mission Really Worth the Time and Money?* STEM ministries. Minneapolis, 1993. p15

Some of the long-established U.K. based mission agencies that have added short-term opportunities to their programmes

(Source - The Short-Term Service Directory. 2000)

Africa Inland Mission
Agape (Campus Crusade in USA) Arab World Ministries
Baptist Missionary Society
The Church Army
Church's Ministry Among Jewish People
Christian Literature Crusade
European Christian Mission
Habitat for Humanity
International Nepal Fellowship
Interserve
London City Mission
Mid-Africa Ministry
Nepal Leprosy Trust
New Tribes Mission
OMF International
Open Air Campaigners
Pocket Testament League
Red Sea Mission Team
Scripture Union
SIM UK
South American Mission Society
Tearfund
United Beach Missions
USPG
The Methodist Church
WEC International
World Vision
Wycliffe Bible Translators
Youth For Christ

7.1 Mission Finances

Almost all mission agencies in North America and Britain report an aging donor base that is not being replaced by younger supporters, and a drop in real terms in financial contributions to long-term missionaries.¹¹⁰ This trend can be cited by both sides of the debate. Some might argue that the growth of the short-term missions has drawn money away from career missionaries. Others would argue that the trend – which pre-dates 1960 – highlights the need to interest the younger generation in missions and that the short-term mission is a helpful tool towards this goal.

The STEM research among former short-term participants, (see table 3 below) indicates a raised level of giving to mission work after the person has returned from a mission trip. REAP International Ministries found that all of their highest individual donors have first been on one of their short-term mission trips.¹¹¹

STEM Ministries in the United States conducted a survey of past team members in 1989 to determine changes in their giving to missions. (See table 3). They received 366 replies.¹¹²

Table 3. CHANGES IN FINANCIAL GIVING PER MONTH

Before short-term mission		After short-term mission	
Number and %.		% of 279	Percentage Change
% of 294			
\$0	87 - 29.6	21 - 7.5	- 75.9
\$1-10	73 - 24.8	44 - 15.8	- 39.7
\$11-25	60 - 20.4	52 - 18.6	-13.4
\$26-50	31 - 10.5	64 - 22.9	+ 106.5
\$51-100	17 - 5.8	54 - 19.4	+ 217.6
\$100 +	26 - 8.8	44 - 15.8	+ 69.2

(the different numbers are because not all respondents answered all the questions)

¹¹⁰ Forward David. *Essential Guide to the Short-Term Mission Trip*. Moody Press.1998. p36

¹¹¹ Wheeler Matthew, Financial Administrator for REAP International Ministries.

¹¹² Peterson T. & Peterson R. *Is Short-Term Mission Really Worth the Time and Money?* STEM ministries. Minneapolis. p.12

Table 3 shows a significant increase in the amount of giving to mission after the respondents had experienced going to the mission location and participating first-hand.

The argument that short-term missions draw away financial support for long-term missions is difficult to sustain. The argument assumes that there is a limited amount of money available for missions. What Greg Livingstone calls the '*Limited-pie theory*'.¹¹³ Very few participants raise the money largely from church central funds. The usual pattern is for the church to give a nominal amount, typically £1-200 to a participant. Most of the fees for a short-term mission outside of Europe range from £1,000-1,500 for a 4-8 week programme. Most of the money is raised from other sources. There seems to be no limit to the ingenuity of people raising funds for short term missions. All kinds of sponsored events from mountain climbing to haircuts and from parachute drops to busking. Below are some of the more popular sources of funding for short-term missions.¹¹⁴

Family and friends	Personal contribution
Sponsored events	Central church funds
Grant making trusts	School and college bursaries
Professional associations	Loans

The evidence strongly points to the conclusion that the vast majority of funds for short-term missions comes from other sources than the traditional long-term mission support. This means that the overall amount of money raised for missions has been substantially increased by the growth of short-term missions.

In the past 30 years the number of mission agencies in the west has increased enormously. Accurate figures are not available, but an increase of

¹¹³ Livingstone Greg. *Does it Work?. A chapter for Stepping Out, A Guide to Short-Term Missions*. YWAM Publishing. Seattle 1992 p.24

¹¹⁴ Wheeler Matthew. *The Fund-raising guide*. REAP International Ministries. 1998.

500% is not an exaggeration. Even with the increased prosperity of western economies, this means that more and more agencies are chasing the available financial support. It is inevitable that new and ever more imaginative means of fund raising will be attempted, especially in America. Some traditional agencies such as W.E.C. forbid their workers to appeal publicly or privately for money. This philosophy is now very rare. At the other extreme 'Open Doors' in America use the secular system of telephone canvassing. Loren Cunningham has a very balanced view on fundraising. He gives YWAM workers sound practical as well as faith-based advice on raising their finances.¹¹⁵ In his book 'Daring to live on the edge' he gives advice on having faith (pages 27-46), giving (pages 115-130) how to ask for money (pages 145-154) and how to assess western affluence (pages 155-162).

7.2 Recruitment of long-term staff.

Undoubtedly the greatest area of success in finding long-term workers via short-term programmes has been the short-term mission agencies *themselves*, in retaining their own workers long-term. The vast majority of long-term staff working with agencies like YWAM and O.M., began their association with a short-term intention and then just stayed on, or returned after a period back home to raise long-term support. An example of this is Peter Conlan,¹¹⁶ who after completing Bible College joined O.M. in 1966, with the intention of serving with O.M. for one year. He is still serving with O.M. 34 years later.¹¹⁷ This is far longer than the typical career missionary serves who started out intending to be long-term. O.M. has many other long-termers of this type. O.M. currently has about 1200 workers that have been serving for 5 years or more.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ Cunningham Loren. *Daring To Live On The Edge*. YWAM Publishing, Seattle, 1991. p145-154.

¹¹⁶ International Projects Director for O.M. ships. (O.M. has 2 ships, the M.V. Logos II and M.V. Doulos.

¹¹⁷ Interview with Peter Conlan, 19 January 2000.

¹¹⁸ Interview with Peter Conlan, 19 January 2000

In 'Ditch' Townsend's survey of selected (232 out of 926 participants) former Tear Fund short-term participants, there is a significant increase in the amount of time spent overseas on mission work *after* the participants' first mission experience from the mid 1980's onward.¹¹⁹ This research supports the widespread anecdotal evidence that there is an increasing trend for people considering long-term mission work, to first seek to experience short-term working in overseas missions, often in their intended long-term location. Townsend had 105 replies(232 mailed). Answers to the survey showed a positive attitude by the participants to short-term mission, with more than half of them actually returning to the field, but with two thirds attempting to do so (including failed applications).¹²⁰

This trend could well be explained by the fact that, the long-term mission agencies have joined in the practice of offering short-term opportunities. This may have drawn the participant into work with that particular agency or gives people who were already considering that agency an opportunity to 'test the water' both with the agency and the location.

Short-term service also has a benefit to long-term mission work in that it does help some to see that they are not suited to overseas work or the stress of living in an alien culture.¹²¹ Before the days of modern short-term missions, one of the problems of missionary societies was the missionary whose first visit to a the field was the start of what was intended as a career, only to find that they were not suited and returned home permanently at the first opportunity, which was usually at the end of their first five-year term. They were known in mission circles as the 'one-termers'. Matthew Spina (from New Jersey USA) went on a short-term mission to Mozambique in 1994, with an open mind about long-term mission service. He says that the experience changed his life for the better, but convinced him that his place of Christian

¹¹⁹ Townsend 'Ditch'. *Short-Termers, a Survey of Tear Fund Short-Term Overseas Volunteers. Between 1972 and 1990*. Tear Fund, London 1991. p.9

¹²⁰ Ibid p.4

¹²¹ Gateley Ian and Jean. *My Reasonable Service*. The Pentland Press Ltd. Durham 1995. p119-134.

service was to be in the USA. He is now the youth pastor for his church and organises annual short-term mission trips for the young people of his church.¹²²

Former O.M. participants are present as long-term missionaries in dozens of countries around the world. The longevity record is probably owned by Ron Penny, who went with the first O.M. team to India in 1962 and is still there today, having worked for other organisations in India after O.M. Approximately 50% of the career missionaries in Italy, first went there with Operation Mobilisation.¹²³

O.M. have a remarkable record in training mission leaders. Apart from their excellent record in retaining their own short-termers as long-term leaders, an impressive list of ex-O.M'ers now head other missions, many founded by them. The late Al Hatch at the IFMA/EFMA Latin America mission consultation in May 1988 referred to 'A veritable missions Mafia of former O.M'ers' in the leadership of a number of new Latin American agencies.¹²⁴

¹²² Interview with Matthew Spina, New Jersey. November 1999.

¹²³ Livingstone Greg. *Does it Work?*. A chapter for *Stepping Out, A Guide to Short-Term Missions*. YWAM Publishing. Seattle 1992. p.24

¹²⁴ Cit. Hicks David. *Globalisation of Missions, a case study of Operation Mobilisation*. Editorial Unilit, Miami 1994. p34

Table 4. Mission Founders Influenced by O.M.¹²⁵

NAME	AGENCY FORMED/AREA	O.M. EXPERIENCE
Virgil Amos	Ambassadors Fellowship (Europe, Africa)	Iran, India
Terry Ascot & John Ferwerda	Middle East media	Middle East
Federico Bertuzzi	Misiones Mundiales	Europe, M.V. Dulos
Pablo Carrillo	Project Magreb (North Africa)	Mexico, Middle East
Paul Choi	Korea Harbour Evangelism	Iran
Ron George	People International	India, Iran
Daniel Gonzalez	Alturas-Cursas Biblios	Spain
K.P. Yohannan	Gospel for Asia	India
Greg Livingstone	Frontiers (Muslim world)	Austria, Middle East
John Miles	REAP Int. Ministries (Africa, Eastern Europe)	Europe, India
George Miley	Antioch Network	India, ships
Marshall Moyle	Central European Mission Fellowship	M.V. Logos, Europe
Doug Nichols	Action International Ministries (Philippines)	India
Thomas Samuel	Quiet Corner (India)	India
Heinz Strupler	New Life (Switzerland)	Europe

Even if it is conceded that some of the long-term mission workers would have become so, even if they had not participated in a short-term mission, the evidence is overwhelming that many long-term workers and leaders in the mission field will affirm that their first experience on a short-term programme was either formative or very influential. Some observers outside of the short-term field have concluded that the main value of short-term missions are as a recruitment 'drag net' to find long-term staff. This view of short-term missions is very narrow, but nevertheless, they do recognise this valuable outcome of the short-term mission phenomenon.

¹²⁵ Hicks David. Globalising Missions, a case study of Operation Mobilisation. Editorial Unilit, Miami 1994. p32

7.3 Publicity and aims

A list of agencies whose published literature promoting their 2000 short-term programmes was obtained and reviewed for this research

Agency	Publicity Title
Arab World Ministries	Go Grow 2000
Africa Inland mission	Reaching & Serving Africans
Baptist missionary Society	BMS Challenge
Christian Vocations	The Short-Term Service Directory
CMS	Encounter 2000 Soulsista Where Is God?
Frontiers	Short-Term Opportunities 2000
International Needs	Changing Lives
International Teams	S-T-R-E-T-C-H 2000
Interserve	On Track
Latin Link	STEP 2000 Programme
OMF	Asia Interactive English Teachers For China
Operation Mobilisation	Teen Street Love Programmes Global Challenge
People International	2000 Short-Term Opportunities
REAP International Ministries	Summer Challenge 2000 African Quest 2000
Red Sea Team International	Serving Short-Term
SIM	Where On Earth? Virtual Mission PACE Teams
YWAM	Global Outreach 2000

Even if one might have a positive view of the agencies aims for their short-term programmes, one thing is clear, it is obvious from reviewing the publicity materials that some agencies do not publicise their main motives. This may be considered a little deceptive. The focus of the publicity is the participant-centred benefits. The publicity usually takes on the form of glossy advertising, thus emphasising the competitive nature of the recruitment process.

Reviewing the subject matter of the short-term mission publicity shows the following content:¹²⁶

¹²⁶ See appendix 5 for a list of published literature promoting 2000 short-term programmes.

- 1) Details of the programmes on offer. This will give their locations and the length of the trip.
- 2) Emphasis the need for the work.
- 3) Declare the past success record of the agency.¹²⁷
- 4) Inform potential candidates of the training they can expect.
- 5) Give brief human-interest stories of past successes.
- 6) Briefly give some operational philosophy of the agency.
- 7) An application form is often an integral part of the publication.
- 8) Frequently the costs are stated.

The British branch of YWAM, in their short-term programme publicity for 2000 give details of 18 programmes in 10 countries.¹²⁸ (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Uganda, Brazil, China, Vietnam, Tibet, Thailand and the U.K.). Activities include children's work, construction, evangelism, community development and 'prayer trekking'. The duration of the projects are from two to six weeks.

The most significant British development in the area of publicity has been the '*Short-Term Service Directory*' published by Christian Vocations. Over recent years, this has become the standard reference publication that many people interested in short-term missions will consult. For example, 'African Quest' (page 22 of the 1999 edition) obtain 80% of their recruits via this directory.

¹²⁷ Singlehurst Laurence. Advance. YWAM magazine 27 January 2000. p2

¹²⁸ Publicity. 'Global Outreach 2000'. YWAM, Harpenden U.K. 1999.

8. Participant-Centred Aims

In surveying the motives and aims of short-term mission participants, Richard Judd demonstrates in table 5 that they have very different motives to the agencies.¹²⁹ (compare table 2).

Table 5

Motivation for choosing a short-term programme	Number of workers (Max. 77)	Number of workers as a %
1. Opportunity for personal and spiritual growth	72	94
2. Definite calling to short-term work	40	52
3. Desired the challenge of an overseas 'adventure'.	40	52
4. Wanted to get a better understanding of mission work and support it more effectively.	39	51
5. Wanted to give some time to make a contribution to the task of world mission.	38	49
6. Had 'free time' to use up.	20	26

The results of this survey are overwhelmingly participant-centred. To become a long-term supporter of the mission they go with, or considering it as a stepping-stone to being a career missionary is not uppermost in their minds. The printed publicity for the short-term missions reflects the aims in table 5. To a large degree, telling the potential recruits what they want to hear - that there are substantial personal and spiritual benefits to be gained by participating in a short-term mission that they are organising. Judd's list of participant's aims are worth examination. However, it is important to note that the survey reveals that for most of the people surveyed, there are a combination of two or more aims. Below each of the stated aims is examined to see how successfully they are achieved.

¹²⁹ Judd Richard. *Do Short-Term Programmes Achieve The Purposes For Which They Were Established?* Dissertation for degree course at London Bible College 1996. p16

8.1 Spiritual Growth

Traditional evangelical teaching from classic evangelical authors such as A.W. Tozer,¹³⁰ Oswald Chambers¹³¹ and Watchman Nee.¹³² is that spiritual growth occurs as a result of *God-centred* initiatives to which Christians respond in obedience and humility. God offers salvation and we respond. The church is there, so we attend. We have the Bible, so we read it. God has told us to share our faith, so we tell others about it. If difficulties arise, we (hopefully) bear them with grace and assume that God is allowing us to be tested and we grow as a result. If we go to the mission field, it is because God has called us and we *obey*. Spiritual growth is *responsive*, a result of following and obeying, and an absence of growth is a result of not following or obeying.

Dr. Nick Isbister and Dr. Martin Robinson's fascinating book, *'Who Do You Think You Are?'* and in particular the chapter 'More about who you are'¹³³ tells us that it is now a feature of our western culture, that a more pro-active approach is being pursued. We must search out things that will make us grow or become more effective. Spiritual growth is looked at more as an *achievement* that we can aim at and employ means to attain it. A key method in this is to psychologically examine our personalities and our 'passions' and to then direct ourselves into 'suitable areas' of service, where we are more likely to achieve success. This approach is much more man-centred than the traditional teaching. The underlying assumption being that God must be calling us to do the things we are best suited to.

So with this aim and the encouragement of mission agency publicity literature, candidates sign up for short-term missions as a means of achieving growth.

¹³⁰ Tozer A W. *The Root of the Righteous*. Christian Publications Inc. Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. 1955. p92-96

Tozer A W. *The Divine Conquest*. Marshall Morgan and Scott, London 1964. p53-63

Tozer A W. *The Best of A.W. Tozer*. Crossway Books, Nottingham U.K. 1993. p105-110

¹³¹ Chambers Oswald, *If Thou Wilt Be Perfect*. Marshall Morgan and Scott London. 1962 p52-61 & 104-112

Chambers Oswald *Living Water*. Marshall Pickering, Basingstoke, U.K. 1987. p227-230

¹³² Nee Watchman. *The Release of the Spirit*. Sure Foundation, Bombay 1965. p83-88.

¹³³ Isbister Dr. Nick and Robinson Dr Martin. *'Who Do You Think You Are?'* Harper Collins Publishers. London 1999. p90-118

The evidence from surveys as well as anecdotal evidence is that the short-term mission is very effective in enhancing spiritual growth. The survey results in the STEM study all indicate enhanced commitment to church, prayer and missions.¹³⁴ The debriefing results often reveal that the participants experience was one of being challenged to live a less materialistic life by the simple lifestyles that they observed in the countries they visited. Most people who go on short-term missions will testify to changes that took place in them. Luis Lotz comment sums it up for us, 'I didn't change Africa much, but Africa changed me.'¹³⁵

8.2 A short-term calling

Some participants know that they will return again and again to short-term missions. This is particularly true of more mature participants, who often have taken early retirement and have the time and resources to fund themselves, with skills and experience that are valuable in the mission location. An example of this are Tim and Anne Marsden. Both retired in their early fifties. Anne was a solicitor and in her spare time a trained Christian councillor. Tim was a structural engineer. At the time of writing, they have made three short-term mission trips and intend to continue to make one or two trips every year for the foreseeable future. They find that their areas of experience and skill are constantly called upon when they go. For example, Anne Marsden has drawn up a Charitable Trust document for a Christian ministry in Soroti, Uganda, in 1999, and advised Kaniki Bible College, Ndola, Zambia, on legal matters in May 2000. Tim Marsden has conducted a structural survey of two buildings in Zambia that were under consideration for purchase by mission organisations in 1999 and May 2000. Having this type of expertise available from reliable professional people at no cost to the mission, is a very useful contribution to their work.

¹³⁴ Peterson T. & Peterson R. *Is Short-Term Mission Really Worth the Time and Money?* STEM ministries. Minneapolis, 1993

¹³⁵ Lotz Luis. Small changes in Africa. *Reformed Church Herald (USA)* June 1991 p44-45

In looking at the aims and motives of the mission agencies and the participants, we must not lose sight of the fact that many people whatever their age, regard a short-term mission as a valuable opportunity to serve *in it's own right*. That it is not necessary to find some other benefit such as future support for agencies or long-term recruitment to justify the programme. They are joined in this opinion by the agencies such as O.M. and YWAM that were created specifically for short-term mission.

8.3 Wanting the Challenge of adventure.

It is tempting to associate this aim with just young people, but many more mature participants are motivated by adventure. This can often be because in their lives they haven't had much opportunity for travel and to experience adventure and perhaps feel that life has passed them by. Here is the chance to do what they would like to have done earlier if they had had the opportunity.

God created humans with the capacity for adventure. In history this has been catered for by having to hunt for food or go to battle. Sport has largely taken the place of these things for many. Young people will often get into petty crime and drugs trying to satisfy the urge for adventure. Some agencies may want a more 'spiritual' reason for their candidates. Others recognise that adventure may be the 'hook' on which to catch the fish. All the other benefits to the various parties can then follow on.

If this is the main motivation of the candidates, they are unlikely to be disappointed. The challenge of the unfamiliar culture and work that will stretch them, the new places and faces, will all add up to an adventure whatever else they achieve.

8.4 Wanted to get a better understanding of mission work and support it more effectively.

This is the sort of category that any participant is likely to tick if presented with it. Whether they would have volunteered this *unprompted* as an aim is difficult to determine. Far more clear is the fact that having been on a short-term

mission, participants will have a much better understanding of how the mission or host church works and will have seen first-hand what their work entails. With this better knowledge comes the ability to be more effective in supporting the ministry. The overwhelming evidence both anecdotal and by survey show that involvement in short-term missions motivates people to longer-term support of many kinds. Table 3¹³⁶ indicates an increase in financial giving. An increase in long-term support in a much wider range of activities is indicated by another section of the STEM research.¹³⁷

Table 6 Mission Related Activities (366 respondents)

	Before short-Term mission	After short-term mission	
	Number	Number	% Change
Fund raising for missions	67	87	+29.9
Housing missionaries	26	40	+53.8
Writing to missionaries	69	169	+144.9
Local Evangelism	143	158	+10.5
Church mission committee	43	79	+83.7
Speaking about missions	47	153	+225.5
Leading mission bible study	15	17	+13.3
Outreach to internationals	51	86	+68.6
No mission activity	68	23	-66.2

Table 6 may look as though it should appear in the section on mission-centred aims (above). This is because in this particular aim the motives of both the participant and mission agency *coincide*. Tables 3 and 6 together are a strong indication of success in increasing participants help with mission work after they return home. This gives a substantial value-added factor to the mission trip.

8.5 Wanted to give some time to make a contribution to the task of world mission.

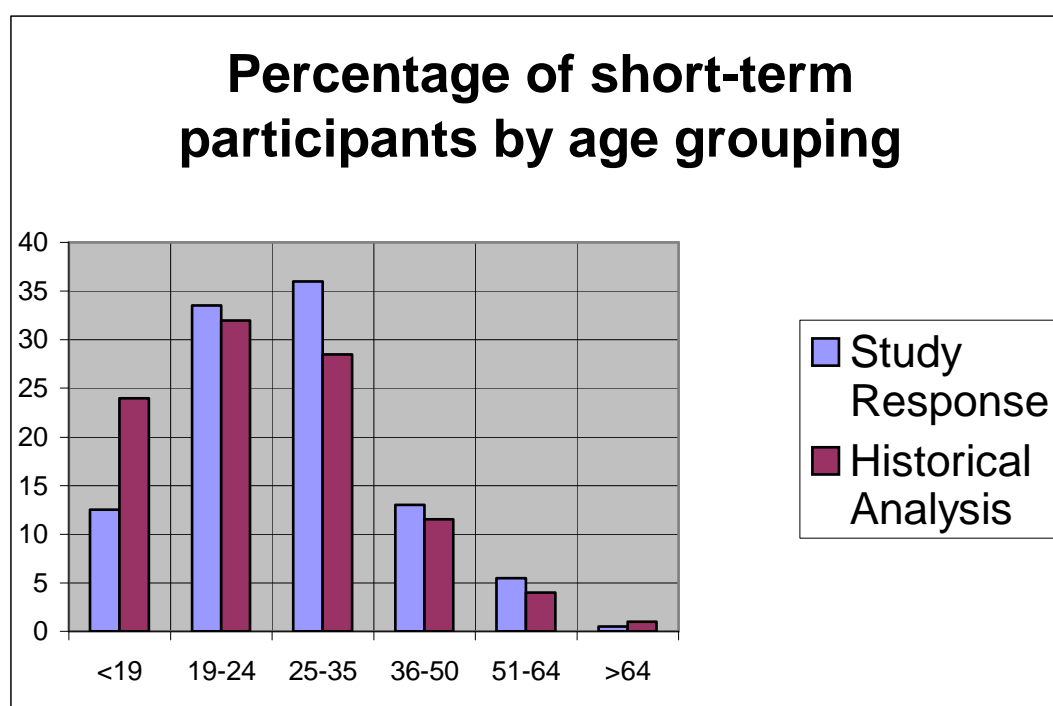
The surprising thing about this aim is that it is number five in the list in Table 5. Had short-term missions been widely available before the second world war, a survey of participants would probably have put this as the number one

¹³⁶ Peterson T. & Peterson R. *Is Short-Term Mission Really Worth the Time and Money?* STEM ministries. Minneapolis. p.12

¹³⁷ Ibid p.15

aim. Again it is the whole idea of service and obedience as opposed to achieving and personal development. Judd's research on the generational differences is very relevant to this question¹³⁸ and are supported by his results indicated in table 6. The STEM research shows the predominance of this age group in Table 7

Table 7 Short-term mission participants by age group



Perhaps Judd's third generation called '*Busters*' (born between the mid 1960's and the late 1970's) Needs to be sub-divided. Even within this grouping and their timescale, motivation seems to have shifted. There is little doubt from the writings of people like Loren Cunningham (YWAM) and George Verwer (O.M.) that their overwhelming priority in the beginning was to *get the job done*. Verwer wrote in 1972 'We must yield possessions, comforts, food and sleep: we must live on the bare essentials that Christ's cause might be furthered.'

¹³⁸ Judd Richard. *Do Short-Term Programmes Achieve The Purposes For Which They Were Established?* Dissertation for degree course at London Bible College 1996. p5-10

The propagations of faith we hold as supreme'.¹³⁹ This philosophy was summarised as early as 1961 in *'The manifesto for world evangelism'* written by Verwer and others that were with him at that time.¹⁴⁰ The task was world evangelism and if you joined them and grew spiritually in the process, this was a bonus. Cunningham, recalling the characteristic of his early teams wrote 'We'd send them on short periods of missionary service - a couple of months or a year. Everyone would know he was there for work, not sightseeing'.¹⁴¹ Aim 5 shows that this motivation has not disappeared, nor is it likely to, it has just been superseded by a more participant-centred aim of achievement and personal development.

8.6 Had free time to use up

In terms of making it *possible* for people to participate in short-term missions, this aim (to use up spare time) ranks second behind only the lowering of the cost of travel. The increase of leisure time and the summer vacation times for students have given the time to go away on short-term missions. Students at college have filled the majority of places on the short-term programmes. In the U.K. it has become an annual routine for agencies to send local representatives to the universities to recruit students for their programmes. In the USA the early programmes of YWAM were aimed at college age young people.¹⁴²

Balanced against this trend is the recently imposed reductions on student financial support from the U.K. government. The need to earn money in the vacations is putting a constraint on the applications. This has always been a factor in the U.S.A. but there, the short-term missions are generally shorter than those offered in the U.K. In fact many of the American missions are only two weeks long. Even the early opportunities offered by O.M. were only a month. This allowed students to still work enough in the other two months of

¹³⁹ Verwer George. *Come Live Die*. Hodder and Stoughton, London 1972. p15.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid p14-16

¹⁴¹ Cunningham Loren. *Is that Really You God?* YWAM Publishing, Seattle. 1984 p38

¹⁴² Ibid. p62.

their summer to get by financially. Overall numbers are not growing with the increased opportunities being offered. Some agencies report a shortage of applicants and some report continued interest at the same level.¹⁴³

Taking a 'year out' (usually an academic year of 9 months) has grown in popularity over the last 15 years. A 'year out' can be taken before or after university in the U.K. In the American system, a year out can be taken any time without effecting your eligibility for continued education. The 'year out' opportunity has seen a response from the mission agencies. Many offer opportunities both for summer programmes and for a year out.

Is having the time to go a good enough reason to do so? On its own, probably not. However, we must put it within the context of the other motives. What is sure is that having the time to go is an important and vital feature in providing the opportunity. Candidate suitability and training must be added to the opportunity to ensure that the aims of the mission project are achieved.

9. Care of the Workers

It is worth dealing with this topic in a little more depth because this is the area where some agencies - particularly in their early days - lacked experience or good practice and the overwhelming motivation was 'to get the job done'. This led to some workers being stressed and even traumatised by their experiences.¹⁴⁴ This is an area where lack of care and experience can tip the scales of the short-term mission debate decidedly against the idea if things go wrong. The potential for stress and trauma is considerable.

Untrained and inexperienced workers are being sent into an unfamiliar and sometimes hostile environment. They may see poverty and suffering on a

¹⁴³ Interview with Paul Linsey, Director of Christian Vocations which publishes the Short-Term Service Directory.

¹⁴⁴ Fawsett Graham. *Ad-mission, The Briefing and Debriefing of Teams of Missionaries and Aid Workers*. YWAM Harpenden 1999. p107-120

scale previously only seen on television. There is little time to vet and train the candidates. The possibilities of following them up after they return are very limited and largely depend on the co-operation of the local church¹⁴⁵ which may itself be ignorant of the issues involved.

With the two great driving forces of 'Agency-centred aims' and 'Participant-centred aims', the danger is that care for the participants takes a back seat in everyone's priorities. British law recognises that there is a 'duty of care' responsibility on mission organisers.¹⁴⁶ There is also a moral duty for a 'pastoral duty of care'. Yet this is the area that has the potential for the longer-lasting effects of the whole enterprise, and there is the danger that these can be very negative effects. Much more emphasis needs to be given to the 'duty of care' that agencies have for their recruits. In the U.K., case law since the Lyme Bay tragedy in which several untrained school children were drowned while crossing Lyme Bay in unsuitable canoes, has moved in the direction of American law, to a much more litigation orientated society. Signed disclaimers will no longer protect any organisation from what the courts may judge as poor practice, failure in 'duty of care' or inadequate briefing or safety measures.

9.1 Recruitment

Hardly any U.K.-based agency regards the typical American two-week mission as worthwhile unless it is a U.K. location. The cost of long-haul flights still demand a four to eight week commitment. This does reduce the pool of potential participants. As previously mentioned, the 'student army' of workers is coming under increasing financial pressure. The growth of recruitment of retired workers will only partially compensate for this.

¹⁴⁵ Gateley Ian and Jean. *My Reasonable Service*. The Pentland Press Ltd. Durham, 1995. p149.

¹⁴⁶ Ng Belinda. *Some Reflections on Pastoral Care*. An article for *Too Valuable To Loose*. Ed. Taylor William D. William Carey Library, Pasadena 1997. p277-286

Once an agency has a short-term programme, there is a pressure to fill the places and make the whole project a 'success'. This raises the danger of recruiting unsuitable candidates. These may be candidates that are too immature in their attitudes to others that will cause problems in the intense experience of living and working with a team 24 hours a day for four to eight weeks. In other cases, their mental or physical health may be suspect.

9.2 Briefing

Short-term workers often need to live in less comfortable circumstances than long-term workers. This is often because the situation they are going to does not normally need to cope with the numbers of people on a team. It is perhaps surprising just how tolerant workers can be to difficult situations - *if they are expecting them*. Preparation and accurate briefing are the key to the well-being of workers in less than comfortable situations doing demanding and unfamiliar work. In practice very few workers leave prematurely.¹⁴⁷

9.3 Health

It cannot be stressed too much, how important health issues are to all mission workers in inclement and unaccustomed climates. A short-term programme can be well researched, the workers well prepared and have excellent local hosts, but it is all in vain if the participants are plagued by continual ill health during their trip.¹⁴⁸

The core problem is that people unaccustomed to tropical climates have little natural resistance to tropical diseases. If we add to this the physical stress of the new environment and often unaccustomed manual work, the potential for

¹⁴⁷ Fawsett Graham. Ad-mission, The Briefing and Debriefing of Teams of Missionaries and Aid Workers. YWAM Harpenden 1999. p17

¹⁴⁸ Miles John (editor). *How To Come Back Alive*, the REAP Health Manual. REAP International Ministries, Birmingham 1995. p2.

ill health is serious. Measures need to be taken to reduce the instances of illness before, during and after the trip. If adequate measures and briefing are organised by the agency, many of the potential health problems can be avoided.

As part of the training and preparation before departure, the agency has a duty to ensure that practical advice in written and verbal form is given to the participants. This advice is best given in a *condensed* form. There are several good books available, but most of them are too long to expect short-term mission participants to read them through. This is particularly true for university students who are studying for exams in the months leading up to their summer vacation. The advice needs to cover the period before departure with all the injections and malaria preventions that need to be obtained.

Many participants are dangerously ignorant of the power and debilitating effect of the sun in tropical climates. Often they see it as a good opportunity to get a sun tan, instead of it being a serious health hazard.¹⁴⁹

Malaria is increasing at an alarming rate in Africa where many short-term workers go, and is a more serious threat to short-term workers than to long-term workers. This is because they do not know the symptoms and initially the symptoms are much like 'flu.¹⁵⁰ Briefing on the symptoms and the remedial action to be taken is essential.

During the trip, health precautions need to become a way of life and the sending agency has a duty to oversee the care.¹⁵¹ Clean water and food are at the heart of the precautions. The agency needs to provide a comprehensive medical kit for the team. The workers must have adequate medical insurance and emergency rescue and repatriation insurance. The workers must know how to access this help and also be aware of what local medical help, if any, is available and what is the best evacuation route.

¹⁴⁹ Lankester Dr. Ted. *Good Health Good Travel*. Hodder and Stoughton, London 1995. p102

¹⁵⁰ Dawood Dr. Richard. *Traveller's Health*. Oxford University Press 1992. p103-113

¹⁵¹ Global Connections. *Code Of Best Practice For Short-Term Missions*. Global Connections, London, 1997. Section 3.

After returning to the home country, the workers need to be aware of any unusual symptoms,¹⁵² and briefed not to ignore them. Some tropical diseases such as Bilharzia¹⁵³ only become apparent after the return home, sometimes months after. Interhealth offer an excellent service of examination for returned workers at reasonable cost.

9.4 Culture Shock

Culture shock is a much misunderstood phenomenon. Workers going on a short-term mission or visit of less than two months are unlikely to experience real culture shock.¹⁵⁴

The reaction that is often mistaken for real culture shock is what we might call the 'wow factor'. This is an initial reaction on arriving in the new culture. It is the wide-eyed amazement at just how different everything is. It is essential for agencies to know the difference between the two phenomena and brief their workers accordingly. Unfortunately many agencies and particularly local churches who send out workers, often fail in this area, sometimes with unfortunate and avoidable results.¹⁵⁵

The 'wow factor' is a confusing reaction that can range from delight to panic. Delight at the warm welcome or the open, smiling reaction of ordinary people to a foreign guest in their country. Fascination at the noise, customs, architecture, food and even the dress of people in their new surroundings.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵² Lankester Dr. Ted. *Good Health Good Travel*. Hodder and Stoughton, London 1995. p136

¹⁵³ Miles John (editor). *How To Come Back Alive, the REAP Health Manual*. REAP International Ministries, Birmingham 1995. p17.

¹⁵⁴ Fawsett Graham. *Ad-mission, The Briefing and Debriefing of Teams of Missionaries and Aid Workers*. YWAM Harpenden 1999. p82-83

¹⁵⁵ Kirby Scott H. *The Short-Term Mission Adventure*. Printing Image, Knoxville, Tennessee, 1998. p56..

¹⁵⁶ Prior Ian (Ed.) *The Christian at Work Overseas*. Tear Fund, Teddington Middlesex. 1976. p23-28

Panic at the unaccustomed heat, the flies, or participants' reaction to the first time they have to use a 'long-drop' pit latrine, or even worse a 'short-drop' one!

Real culture shock is a more serious problem. It usually comes on after about six to eight months in the location, and lasts three to six months. During that time the worker may hate the location and everything to do with it. Some things that were novel, interesting and even fun to the short-term worker when they first arrived, can for the medium or long-term worker after six months become a serious source of irritation and contributes to an overall negative attitude. They will crave anything that was remotely to do with their own culture. Food will be near the top of the list. Fawcett points out that the problem may well be the sense of loss of one's own cultural comforts more than an adverse reaction to the one being currently experienced.¹⁵⁷ This is an interesting observation. It is certainly true that a longing for aspects of the home culture is one of the main symptoms of culture shock. Other symptoms of culture shock: homesickness, loss of interest, irritation, loss of appetite, poor concentration, tiredness, a feeling of guilt, anger, disturbed sleep, a breakdown in good relationships.

After some months most workers will come out of it. The best way to cope with culture shock is to *recognise it* for what it is and realise that it will soon pass, because it usually does. In the rare cases of persistent culture shock, the best course is for the worker to return home. Nothing is worse than realising that it is going to continue. The problem is far more serious if it comes as an unexpected and misunderstood reaction. Adequate briefing and preparation by the sending agency,¹⁵⁸ coupled with care on the field, can reduce considerably the effects of culture shock.

¹⁵⁷ Fawcett Graham. *Ad-mission, The Briefing and Debriefing of Teams of Missionaries and Aid Workers*. YWAM Harpenden 1999. p37-40

¹⁵⁸ Adiwardana Margaretha. *Formal and Non-Formal Pre-Field Training*, an article for *Too Valuable To Lose*. Ed. Taylor William D. William Carey Library, Pasadena 1997. p207-215

Generally short and medium-term agencies have a good record in preparing workers. The work of Graham Fawcett for YWAM probably represents some of the best practice among such agencies. YWAM and O.M. have learned much by their experience gained in their early years. The greatest positive factor helping agencies is the high motivation of their candidates. A quote from Verwer illustrates this in it stronger terms. 'We have no rights! Every petty personal desire must be subordinated to the supreme task of reaching the world for Christ.'¹⁵⁹

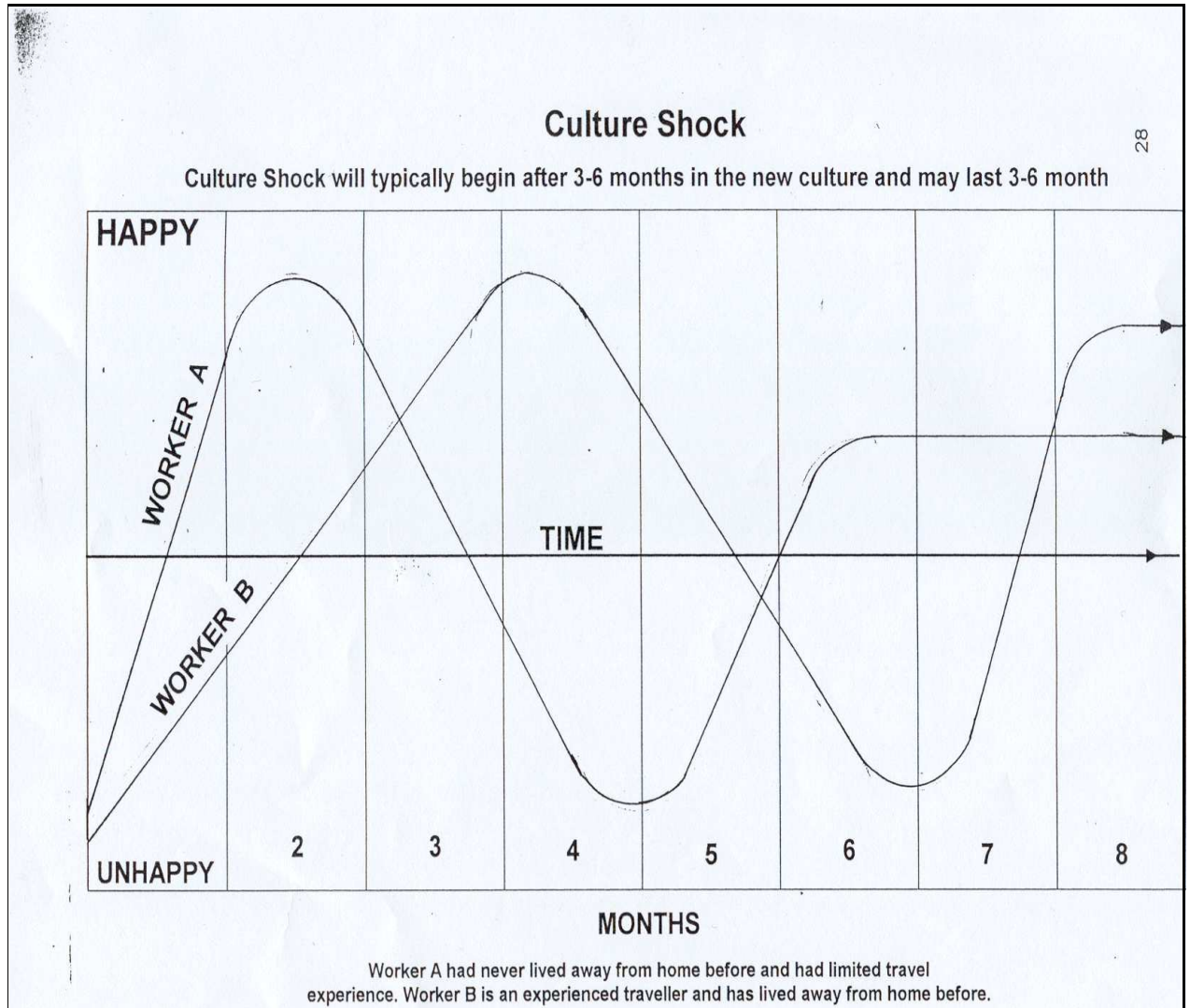
Table 8 shows the typical culture shock experience of workers entering and staying in a different culture. Their initial reaction in the first weeks can often be what I have called the 'Wow factor'. This is indicated in the table as 'happy', followed by the negative experience 'unhappy' as the novelty of the new culture wears off and they begin a kind of mourning for their own familiar culture. This often translates into negative attitudes to the new culture. This in turn wears off as they focus on the task in hand. Failure to overcome this period of culture shock accounts for the attrition of some workers¹⁶⁰ who return home prematurely or in the case of long-term workers do not return to the field after their first term.

¹⁵⁹ Verwer George. *Come Live Die*. Hodder and Stoughton, London 1972. p15.

¹⁶⁰ Mckaughan Paul. *Missionary Attrition: Defining The Problem*. an article for *Too Valuable To Loose*. Ed. Taylor William D. William Carey Library, Pasadena 1997. p16.

Table 8 Typical pattern of culture shock

Typical Culture Shock Patterns



Culture shock to some degree or other will effect most mission workers who are in a foreign culture. Its effects are lessened if the worker is a seasoned traveller and has an adventurous outlook on life.

The effect is lessened even more if the worker is situated in a 'cultural bubble' which may be a mission location with western standards of accommodation and fellow westerners around and able to still use their own language and style of worship.

9.5 Reverse culture shock

This sometimes occurs after workers return home and is potentially a much more serious problem than culture shock while abroad. Generally the longer the worker has been away, the more serious this effect can be. It can begin very soon after returning home and can continue for up to a year and in some rare cases last years. The negative effects of this phenomena can last a lifetime. Michael Griffiths warns of the danger of not paying attention to the issues facing the returning missionary.¹⁶¹

In its most extreme form it can lead to depression, post traumatic stress and serious mental illness, affecting not only the individual, but also their family. This is particularly so if it is affecting the father of a family. It is often the case that the longer you have been away, the more difficult the adjustment.¹⁶²

The symptoms of reverse culture shock

Initially it can just be a feeling of being out of place, that the returned worker doesn't belong in the place *where they belong!* This is soon accompanied by a feeling of isolation from the very people who were once so close.¹⁶³ Anne Townsend graphically illustrates just how much out of place a returning missionary can feel when they are back in their 'own culture'.¹⁶⁴ Their values may have changed to the point where they are disgusted with the worldliness and materialism of our wasteful western consumer society. They may find it a frustration that their own friends, family or church just can't see the emptiness of it all.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶¹ Griffiths Michael. *A Task Unfinished*. Monarch Publications, Crowborough, East Sussex. U.K. 1996. 105-109

¹⁶² Jordan Peter. *Re-Entry, Making The Transition From Missions To life At Home*. YWAM Publishing, Seattle, 1992. p77-80.

¹⁶³ Fawsett Graham. *Ad-mission, The Briefing and Debriefing of Teams of Missionaries and Aid Workers*. YWAM Harpenden 1999. p42

¹⁶⁴ Townsend Anne. *The Missionary at Home*. A chapter for *Love Your Missionary* Ed. By Martin Goldsmith. MARC, East Sussex. 1985. p39-68.

¹⁶⁵ Jordan Peter. *Re-Entry, Making The Transition From Missions To life At Home*. YWAM Publishing, Seattle, p53

Whilst away their attitudes to many things and their interests may have radically changed.¹⁶⁶ So the friends and colleagues that they had so much in common with before they went, are now less interesting to be with. The friends may see the change in the worker and feel uneasy with them. That precious camaraderie that they once enjoyed - *and have been so looking forward to renewing* - has gone and the disappointment can be very depressing.¹⁶⁷ There is a sense of loss, disappointment and even grief. The great homecoming that they had anticipated so much, is a disappointment and a frustration.

The worker may experience a great frustration at their own inability to communicate just how poor are the good people they have been with, compared to the affluence of lifestyle of the home surroundings. Their whole society, including family and friends may now seem very devalued in their eyes. The country and culture that they were once proud of, seem to have lost much of their value. They may begin to feel guilty about having come home at all! Questions arise such as 'what am I doing here, when there is such need over there?', or 'have I completely missed God's guidance?'

So many people that they meet are not interested, or not interested enough, in what they have been doing or the people they have been with while they were away. People smile and greet them and ask 'did you had a good time?' while away. Yet when the returned worker tries to explain even the most superficial details of their experience, the listener immediately loses interest, and they realise that they were only making 'small talk' and are not really interested in the 'mega-experience' that the worker has had and its profound effect on their life. The result of this lack of understanding or interest, is that the returned worker goes into a private world of resentment and stops trying

¹⁶⁶ Kirby Scott H. *The Short-Term Mission Adventure*. Printing Image, Knoxville, Tennessee, 1998. p101.

¹⁶⁷ Fawsett Graham. *Ad-mission, The Briefing and Debriefing of Teams of Missionaries and Aid Workers*. YWAM Harpenden 1999. p41-46

to talk to anyone about it. The more they bottle it up, the more the resentment and disappointment grows.

Then the big question that faces some, is what to do now? It is difficult to find any value in the things they might do, compared with what you have been doing. There is a reluctance to get involved in a job that is of so little value in their estimation. The medium-term worker has often given up their former employment to take the opportunity to go, and now needs a job.¹⁶⁸

Consequently returned workers start to devalue themselves, because they cannot do anything that seems a valuable - given their new set of values - thing to do.

Any of the above difficulties will be exaggerated if the worker comes back with an illness. The sickness can affect them emotionally and spiritually.¹⁶⁹ 'Where is God in all this? I have done my best to serve Him and here I am, suffering as a consequence!'

9.6 Remedies for reverse culture shock.

One of the unfortunate things about reverse culture shock is that some of the most important remedies are not in the hands of the returned workers themselves, but in the hands of other people. It is very important, spiritually, emotionally and psychologically, that the agency, family, friends and the church, of returning workers, show a proper interest in what they have been doing.¹⁷⁰ Talking through all the experiences, difficulties and emotions that they have experienced while away, with people they love and respect is of supreme importance. The opportunity to share with, and answer questions from genuinely interested people is the best therapy of all.

¹⁶⁸ Gateley Ian and Jean. *My Reasonable Service*. The Pentland Press Ltd. Durham, 1995 p150

¹⁶⁹ Fawsett Graham. *Ad-mission, The Briefing and Debriefing of Teams of Missionaries and Aid Workers*. YWAM Harpenden 1999. p45

¹⁷⁰ Forward David. *The Essential Guide to the Short-Term Mission Trip*. Moody Press. Chicago 1998. p183

The sending agency or the sending church has a particular responsibility here. The agency needs to provide an appropriate debriefing.¹⁷¹ The church leader that will not allow a returning worker to share with the church their experiences, may unwittingly be causing great harm to someone that they should be proud of. The use of slides, photos and videos should be encouraged. Writing an article for the church magazine is another outlet. The church that is so locked into their pattern of meeting/service that they can't find time for this can unwittingly be the cause of serious problems for the returned worker.¹⁷²

The home church has a great responsibility of care for returning workers.¹⁷³ Enlightened and educated pastoral care should await them. In a few cases they may be very wounded by bad experiences while abroad. This can sometimes result from lack of care by the home church or a failure by the home church to assist the agency in its selection procedure. It may have been discovered too late that a participant was not suitable, when the causes of the problems were well known to the home church, but they never communicated this to the agency.¹⁷⁴ The agency has a duty of care for the worker that includes trying to ensure that the home church also does their important part. Each church should have a debriefing plan for returning workers, it is a serious responsibility.

The debriefing process deployed by the sending agency and/or church, if it is done well, has benefits all round. The workers are helped to put their experience in context and adjust to life back in their home culture. The agency should take the opportunity to learn as much as possible about the trip and the hosts. This will enable them to assess their project and the preparations that they made and the briefing of the workers, leading to improvements where needed.

¹⁷¹ Kirby Scott H. *The Short-Term Mission Adventure*. Printing Image, Knoxville, Tennessee, 1998. p100.

¹⁷² Ibid p102.

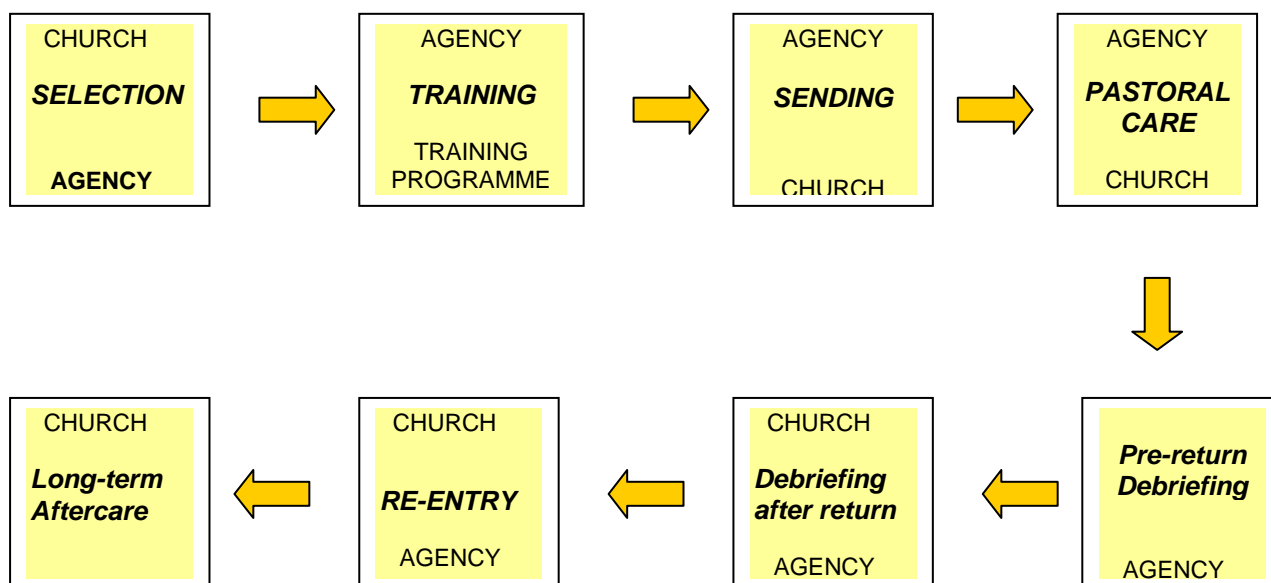
¹⁷³ Global Connections. *Code Of Best Practice For Short-Term Missions*. Global Connections London, 1997, Section 4.

¹⁷⁴ Taylor William D. *Too Valuable To Loose*. William Carey Library, Pasadena 1997. p10

Table 9

Care for mission workers

A suggested division of responsibilities of involvement between the agency and the participant's home church.



Communications between the home church and the agency is essential if proper care for the participants in any mission work is to be effective. This is often neglected by some short-term agencies. This is one advantage of short-term missions organised by a home church for their members, - they can fill both roles. The Global Connections 'Code of Best Practice For Short-term Missions' is attempting to highlight this need.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁵ Global Connections. *Code Of Best Practice For Short-Term Missions*. Global Connections, London, 1997. No ISBN. Section 4.

9.7 The Importance of Cultural Awareness

Lack of cross-cultural sensitivity and ignorance of important cultural norms, is an area where short-term missions have come under criticism from Goldsmith¹⁷⁶ and Griffiths, who insist that short-term participants just do not have the time to learn and adapt enough to foreign culture unless they are career missionaries.¹⁷⁷ The participants need to be briefed on the culture that they are intending to visit, otherwise there is the potential for causing misunderstanding and offence. A similar problem exists as with the medical briefing. Just how much reading and preparation can be expected of someone going on mission for just a few weeks? There are lots of academic books on most of the world's cultures, but it is unlikely that the short-term candidates will read them. The answer is once again a condensed publication, brief but containing all the important aspects of the culture being visited. REAP International Ministries have produced their own cross-cultural training manual for workers going to Africa.¹⁷⁸ The great advantage of this manual is that it contains most of the cultural aspects of sub-Saharan Africa in only 45 pages. This is short enough for workers going only for a few weeks to be motivated to read. It has a general section on culture, world view and looking at ourselves as others see us. It goes on to deal with all the main aspects of African culture, how it differs from ours and how to behave in various situations. This includes sections on tradition, family, the spirit world, food, gender relationships and differing moral codes. The final part of the publication deals with culture shock and re-entry into our own culture.

No one can escape their own culture completely. It is indelibly printed in our psyche and will inevitably surface in response to 'triggering' circumstances. Likewise people can never fully adapt to another culture, but they can be careful to avoid misunderstandings, attitudes, words or actions that cause offence. The major aspects of a culture can be learned. If the work is specific

¹⁷⁶ Goldsmith Martin. *Don't Just Stand There*. Inter-Varsity Press, Leicester 1976. p103-115

¹⁷⁷ Griffiths Michael. *Give Up Your Small Ambitions*. Inter Varsity Press 1978. p116-119

¹⁷⁸ Miles John. *Worlds Apart, a Cross-Cultural Training Manual for Africa*. REAP International Ministries, Birmingham 1999.

to a particular area, it is the responsibility of the agency to brief participants about the local culture, and how they should behave in it.

Almost all short-term mission programmes include some kind of cultural briefing. Judging by anecdotal evidence, many of them are inadequate. Some such as Latin Link will use role play and set up things like a mock arrivals procedure at a South American airport etc. This type of preparation has two benefits. It educates about the country of destination and also prepares the participant for the impact of the culture on them. The disadvantage of this activity is that it is time consuming in a briefing programme where time is always short. A good way to overcome this problem is to back up the training with literature specifically for the culture that the participants are entering.

Cultural briefing should fall into two categories. First the general aspect of culture that are common to all. This covers things like 'What is culture?', 'World view', 'How others see us' and 'Cultural arrogance'.

The second part of the briefing should cover the specific cultural practices and norms of the culture being visited and include the following:¹⁷⁹

The importance of tradition	The role of the family
Gender issues	The hospitality culture
How guests should behave	Types of food
Customs surrounding food	Attitudes to alcohol
Sense of humour	Dress codes
Customs for greeting	Moral standards
Types of worship	Political climate
Bribery	Body language

¹⁷⁹ Miles John. *Worlds Apart, a Cross-Cultural Training Manual for Africa*. REAP International Ministries, Birmingham 1999. Contents page.

10. Host-Centered Aims

The low prominence that Host-Centred Aims have in tables 2 and 5 is surprising, perhaps even shocking. It is not unreasonable to wonder why the aims of the hosts are not at or near the top of the priority list for everyone engaged in short-term missions. It is the host - who may be a local church, or a long-term mission situation - that makes the trip possible. It is the host's work that the trip is designed to assist, and it is in the locality of the host that this particular attempt to evangelise, feed the hungry, educate the uneducated, house the homeless or care for the orphaned and widowed, is taking place. It is the host that best knows the local people, their culture and language, the needs of the locality, and the needs of the host ministry best.

One of the dilemmas that mission agencies face is that their aims and the aims of the host do not always agree. This is a complicated issue. Even though the agency in the form of its researchers and long-term workers may have a basically good relationship with the host, the agency will often 'live with' or tolerate aims that they know the host has, that they do not agree with. The agency may even have the aim of *educating* the host into having 'better', aims - in other words, the agency's aims; which are in the agency's opinion, more worthy.

Mission and aid agencies constantly have to guard against the possibility that their hard-won finances are put into things that they consider corrupt and aimed at personal financial gain of people in the host community. Corruption in poor communities has always been a problem for missions. Even some people's motivation for conversion to Christianity has been suspect. This is a complicated cultural and moral issue outside of the scope of this study, but we have to note that it is an issue frequently on the minds of mission workers. It is not just large-scale corruption of aid that is an issue. At the other end of the spectrum is the poor third world pastor who wants help for the very modest

school fees for his children, or a motor cycle to visit his rural churches that normally take him a day to walk to. This can be viewed as personal gain, or as a good investment in the life and ministry of that pastor.

A third-world host in the form of a local church and the pastor, will welcome short-term teams and individual workers for many reasons, usually good reasons. First is the genuine hospitality culture of most third-world cultures, that will give a warm welcome to Christians visiting from the west. There are a number of *perceived* benefits that the host can derive from such visits:

1) Substantial status is gained by the host church and the pastor because they have foreign friends who will visit them and help in the ministry. This gaining of status can have greater significance if the host church is in a country where the church is restricted or persecuted. It is a well-documented fact that in the communist days in Eastern Europe, authorities were often more careful how they treated churches or Christian prisoners, if they knew that they had contacts and lines of communication to the West. Example: Klaus Wagner was sentenced to ten years imprisonment for distributing Bibles in Romania. He was released after ten months because thousands of protest letters were sent to Romania from supporters in America and Europe.

2) The visiting team usually bring financial help of some sort. This may be cash gifts and/or finances for building materials.

3) The extra manpower coupled with the western 'can-do' culture will accomplish things like the construction of buildings (often church buildings) remarkably quickly.

4) The possibility of an invitation and sponsorship for a reciprocal visit by the host pastor and other church members, to the home church of the team.

5) There is a real curiosity in many of the host churches about people from the West. Contact and friendships are eagerly sought after in many places. This

was, and to a lesser extent, still is particularly true in the ex-Communist countries that opened up to Western visitors. The youth of these countries, are fascinated to meet the youth of the West and often regard them as a role-model in things like behaviour, fashion and music.

10.1 Disadvantages of some host-centered aims.

There are some disadvantages to virtually all the perceived advantages that the host has. Whether they out-weigh the advantages is all a matter of perspective and lies at the heart of the dilemma facing mission agencies, mentioned in paragraph two of this section. In making our judgements on these issues we need to beware of cultural arrogance - the deeply-held belief in Western minds that we always know what is best for everyone.

What Western agencies may see as creating a 'dependency culture'¹⁸⁰ in third world situations may from the host's perspective be seen as meeting desperate and pressing needs. In short: *one man's dependency is another man's answer to prayer!* Below are some disadvantages to each of the 'host's perceived benefits as listed above:

1. The status that host churches gain from their foreign visitors can go too far. It can begin to separate the church from the community it is trying to reach.

Example: A large Rhema church in Harare, Zimbabwe, is linked to an American charismatic denomination. Its pastor is American, the services are very American in style. The church appears not to have much in common with the local people or their culture.

2 and 3. Poor third-world church members really have to sacrifice to give financially to their churches. If it is realised that relatively large amounts of money are regularly coming in from foreigners, there is no motivation for the

¹⁸⁰ Schwartz Glenn. *Dependency Among Mission-Established Institutions: Exploring the Issues*. World Mission Associates, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, 1996. p45.

local Christians to give, thus losing the commitment, sense of ownership and spiritual growth that comes from sacrificial giving.¹⁸¹

Example: A church in Chililabomwe, Zambia, asked a British agency (REAP International Ministries) to send a short-term team to build them a church building. The agency was unable to meet the request. Four years later, the church building is three quarters completed from the church members own resources. It has taken longer, but the sense of achievement and ownership for the congregation is more than compensation.

4. Many third-world pastors who have been sponsored to study in the West have moved away from their culture and identification with their local community. Upon return to their homes they have raised economic expectations. This is particularly true if they came from a rural home setting. They often do not want to return to the rural situation but gravitate to the cities.

5 and 6. Curiosity towards Western culture among young people from poorer economies leads to them wanting to emulate our culture. Materialism and unrealistic expectations then set in. Older church leaders in their culture become antagonistic to their own young people and the Christian representatives of the culture that they see as responsible for corrupting their young people.

11. Benefits to the Sending Churches

There are three main ways that Western churches become involved in short-term mission.

- 1) Hosting an evangelistic mission in their locality.
- 2) Supporting one or more of their members participating in a mission.
- 3) Organising their own church team.

¹⁸¹ Schwartz Glenn. *Dependency Among Mission-Established Institutions: Exploring the Issues*. World Mission Associates, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, 1996. p48

The third one of these is the one that has the potential for the greatest impact on the life of the church simply because it involves more of the members. From the inception of the project through to the debriefing and report-back of the team, it is a unifying influence on the church. A sense of working together to achieve a valuable mission aim. This is often followed up by an ongoing relationship with the foreign host church and sometimes return visits by the church members and leadership.

The priority and profile of missions in general will be improved as the church becomes involved itself in hands-on involvement. This translates the idea of mission from '*something-they-do-out-there*' to '*something-we-do-ourselves*'. This type of personal involvement by ordinary Christians can be a powerful new element in the life of the church. David Forward reports that prior to the first short-term mission in his church, there was no missions committee and very little interest in missions. Since they started the programme in 1984, four committees have been formed to oversee various mission activities in the church and overall giving to all types of mission activities by the church has increased dramatically.¹⁸² Forward makes the valid point that 'Many Christians find it easier to share their faith in a distant mission site than to do so at home'¹⁸³

Contact of ordinary church members with Christians who have little or nothing materially, but are very hospitable to visitors can be a challenge to Western Christians to live a less materialistic lifestyle and to give more to missions and poverty relief. An increased appreciation of the universality of the body of Christ is an inevitable result of visiting the mission location.

The mission involvement can provide new opportunities to serve, not only for those that go, but for those who support them. People who can't go

¹⁸² Interview: *Forward David*. Author of 'Essential guide to the Short-Term Mission Trip' and Co-ordinator of short-term missions for Faith Presbyterian Church, Stokes, New Jersey, USA.

¹⁸³ Forward David. *Essential Guide to the Short-Term Mission Trip*. Moody Press.1998. p.28

themselves can often be found collecting and packing items to be sent in a van or a sea container. People with particular skills such as computer skills, building, mechanical or administrative, can employ their skills in mission work.

Church members who may be considering a career in mission or development work have the chance to 'Test their call'. A medium-term project is obviously much better than the short-term mission. It gives them time to experience culture shock and also to see if their health will stand up to other climates.

Short and medium-term missions are an ideal training ground for future leaders. Church structures in the West often do not accommodate emerging leaders in their need to gain leadership experience. A young Christian who shows potential can be given leadership experience for a limited time.

12. Conclusion

The apostle Paul did not embark on his missionary journeys with the aim of developing the preaching skill or the geographical and cultural education of himself or his team. His aim was not to publicise his church in Antioch or to raise money for it. His aim really was just to get the job done. That job was to make Christ known to those who didn't know Him.

Much of the research in this dissertation has highlighted motives and aims *other* than those pursued by the great apostle in the church's early days. The Western agencies involved would insist that they *ultimately* have the same aims as the apostle Paul. The questions revolve round the various methods employed to achieve the goals of world evangelism and expressing the love of God in relief of the appalling poverty that afflicts much of this world today.

Short-term missions are seen as both a means of achieving the goals and as a means of raising money or support for other, longer-term programmes to achieve their aims. To this somewhat convoluted set of aims we must add the

undoubted benefits to the participants and consequently their home churches through the spiritual growth and education of their members.

In my introduction, I declared a personal interest in short-term missions as part of my job. This meant that I approached my research with an existing conviction that short-term missions are a valuable tool in the overall task of world evangelism. I have to confess that my studies have *dented* my conviction without altogether eradicating it. It has been a sobering experience to look at all the issues in this paper and observe the many mistakes and pitfalls exhibited by some agencies and churches in the short-term mission sphere. The reservations expressed by Griffiths and Goldsmith demand an answer. Their views have moderated over recent years as short-term missions have adapted to and directed their efforts in support of long-term mission work. Nevertheless, their basic reservation in the areas of language and culture still stand.

To the question 'do short-term missions achieve the various aims and objectives of the participants, missions, and hosts?' We can answer that they do most of the time. Whether all those aims are appropriate or laudable is very subjective and depends much on individual perspectives.

The pastor of an economically poor church in rural Mozambique who has just had a brick church building constructed for him, would definitely say that the aims had been achieved. He would take exception to the academic missionary educator in the West who says that the young, culturally inexperienced students, not speaking the local language, who financed and built his church building should not be involved in missions work. He would explain to the educator that his church will now grow fast because they have the status of a good building. They no longer have to meet under a tree and dodge the rain in the rainy season. An academic missionary educator might say that the short-term team has created a 'dependency culture' in that pastor

and his church.¹⁸⁴ The pastor might say 'This building is your dependency theory, but it is my answer to prayer and fasting'.

There is no real evidence that short-term missions damage long-term missions or their finances. In fact the opposite is true. Evidenced by the fact that many long-term mission agencies are now offering short-term opportunities. They are hardly going to engage in activities that damage their traditional work!

What is clear is that short-term missions are at their most effective when they are done well. This is a rather obvious conclusion, but so often short-term mission work is undertaken without adequate research or effective training of the participants. Poor practice in one area leads to bad results in other areas. A poorly researched project and an inadequately trained team leads to poor health on the trip and a bad experience for the team members or individuals who have had such high expectations of their trip. This in turn can lead to traumatic reaction to the trip. This is particularly true if the team members have been in an emergency or hunger relief situation. Poor practice can have a 'chain reaction' of difficult experiences for everyone involved.

This does not stop with the participants. In countries where the Christian gospel is not welcome and Christians are persecuted, a badly briefed team can cause residual problems for the local Christians once the team has departed. In the Communist era in eastern Europe, some local Christians were oppressed, fined and persecuted as a result of a visit by inadequately trained workers.

The astonishing volume of short-term missionaries, (particularly from America) that is indicated by the statistics at the start of this dissertation, show that what has been called '*The short idea*', is a phenomenon that is unlikely to diminish in the near future. They outnumber long-term missionaries many times

¹⁸⁴ Schwartz Glenn. *Dependency Among Mission-Established Institutions: Exploring the Issues*. World Mission Associates, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, 1996. p25

over. Some long-term missions have come to depend on their input.¹⁸⁵ There is little doubt that the short-term mission can be a great servant of the long-term mission, and is at its best *when organised as a service* to the long-term mission.

In the U.K. Global Connections have taken an important initiative in publishing their 'Code of best practice for short-term missions'. Late in the day, this is an attempt to raise the standards of short-term mission. Missions that sign up to the code are required to attend twice yearly consultations. The only weakness of this is that the consultations are conversations among the organisers of short-term mission. The organisers of long-term mission need to be in on the conversations. In Canada, the code is also being promoted. The great omission is the lack of a code in the United States where the majority of participants come from.

The weak-link in short-term missions are the ones that are organised by local churches in the West. Many are limited to their own resources and they often neglect to take outside advice from people who have experience. They are a law unto themselves and little can be done about it. There is often an arrogance that believes that they know what is best for themselves and their hosts. Sometimes, financial help is offered with 'strings attached'. Groups with a particular doctrinal emphasis will seek to 'recreate in their own image' using their economic strength and often the lack of awareness of the hosts to accomplish their aims. This is the 'unacceptable face' of short-term missions. Perhaps if the agencies of both short and long-term missions adopted a unified set of aims and standards and published and promoted them relentlessly, it would have some effect on the mission mavericks' from local churches.

It is safe to conclude that the overwhelming majority of short-term mission work is now carried out in support of, and under the direction of long-term mission agencies or local pastors. We are approaching a *convergence* of

¹⁸⁵ Interview with Jorn Pederson, vice Principal of Kaniki Bible College, Ndola, Zambia.

aims, with the short-term missions supporting long-term work and long-term missions adopting short-term activities. For the army of short-term workers this is both their strength and their safety and represents a major contribution to completing what Michael Griffiths justifiably calls '*A Task Unfinished.*'

John Miles

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Appendix 1

Activities offered by short and medium-term mission agencies in the U.K.

Administration/Finance	Agriculture
Art/craft	Building
Camps	Children's work
Church-based work	Church planting
Cultural awareness	Development/aid
Drama/dance	Drug/alcohol concern
Encouragement	Evangelism (abroad)
Evangelism (U.K.)	Gardening
Healthcare/education	Housekeeping/catering
Houseparents	Linguistics
Literacy	Literature/distribution
Media	Mission training
Music	Politics
Maintenance	Prayer
Research	Schools work
Social care/concern	Specialist/professional
Teaching (TEFL)	Youth work

Appendix 2

U.K. based mission agencies offering practical activities.

Abernethy Trust	Latin Link
Action Partners Ministries	Lee Abbey International
Africa Inland Mission	Lightforce International
African Quest	Littledale Trust
Agape	Mercy Ships
Aid to Russia	Mid Africa Ministry
Ashburnham Christian Trust	Middle East Christian Outreach
Baptist Missionary Society	Nepal Leprosy Trust
Bethany Project	New Tribes Mission
Care	Novi Most International
Chinese Church Support Ministries	Oasis Trust
Churches Ministry Among Jews	OMS International
CLC Bookshops	Operation Mobilisation
Church Mission Society	People International
Cross Links	Pioneer DNA
Crusaders	Poplars Church
CRY	PROSPECTS
Damascus Trust	Qua Iboe Fellowship
Ellel International	REAP International Ministries
Emmanuel International	Rob Frost Team
Fellowship Afloat Trust	Saltmine Trust
Friends of Ludhiana	Scripture Union
Frontiers	SIM
Gospel Mission South America	Soapbox Expeditions
HCJB	South American Mission Society
Habitat For Humanity	Stepping Stones
Hope Now	Teachers for China
ICE Charitable Trust	Tearfund
IFES	Teen Challenge
International China Concern	Time for God
International Needs	USPG
International Nepal Fellowship	WEC International
International Teams	World Vision
Interserve	Wycliffe Bible Translators
John Simonds Trust	Youth For Christ
L'Arche	Youth With a Mission

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A list of agencies whose published literature promoting their 2000 short-term programmes was obtained and reviewed for this research

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Baptist missionary Society	BMS Challenge
Christian Vocations	The Short-Term Service Directory
CMS	Encounter 2000 Soulsista Where Is God?
Frontiers	Short-Term Opportunities 2000
International Needs	Changing Lives
International Teams	S-T-R-E-T-C-H 2000
Interserve	On Track
Latin Link	STEP 2000 Programme
OMF	Asia Interactive English Teachers For China
Operation Mobilisation	Teen Street Love Programmes Global Challenge
People International	2000 Short-Term Opportunities
REAP International Ministries	Summer Challenge 2000 African Quest 2000
Red Sea Team International	Serving Short-Term
SIM	Where On Earth? Virtual Mission PACE Teams
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