
Howard Culbertson, mission professor at Southern Nazarene University, gives the following commandments for short-term mission teams:

Boyce College

World Impact Center News

1. *Thou shalt not expect to find things as thou hast at home, for thou has left thy home to find things differently.*
 2. *Thou shalt not take anything too seriously. A willingness to accept things as they are lays the foundation for a good trip to another country.*
 3. *Thou shalt not let other group members get on thy nerves. Thou raised good money to set aside this time to enjoy thyself.*
 4. *Thou shalt not forget that, at all times, thou dost represent thy own country and the Lord Jesus Christ.*
 5. *Thou shalt not be overly worried. He who worrieth hath no pleasures. Few things people worry about are ever fatal.*
 6. *Remember thy passport so that thou knowest where it is at all times. A person without documents is a person without a country.*
 7. *Blessed is the person who says, "When in _____ do as the _____ do." If in difficulty use common sense and thy American friendliness.*
 8. *Do not judge all _____ by the person with whom thou hast had trouble.*
 9. *Remember, thou are a guest in _____. He who treateth his host with respect shall be treated as an honored guest.*
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As we enter a new year and a new decade, we will begin this year's newsletter with a focus on short-term missions. Over the past several decades there has been a tremendous upsurge in the number of short-term mission trips and missionaries from North American evangelical churches (I refer to short-term as trips typically one week to three months in length). Tens of thousands of Southern Baptist church members annually are involved in short-term mission trips through the IMB, and that does not include the tens of thousands more who take trips outside the IMB and other evangelical Christian groups involved in short-term missions.

A big reason for the popularity of short-term missions is the fact that local churches have the desire to be more involved personally in the global mission effort. People desire to 'experience' missions. Gone are the days when people were simply willing to pray for and give of their financial resources to support long-term workers appointed by these agencies. People and churches desire first-hand experience and personal involvement in the mission effort often before they are willing to let go of their financial resources.

For many people short-term mission trips are an initial step in discerning whether or not they believe God is calling them to vocational missions. It is a common belief that Christians who have a short-term mission experience are more likely to return as long-term workers. However, that fact that there has not been a significant increase in long-term appointments as compared to the enormous increase in short-term mission participants indicates that perhaps this is not as true as many think it is. If this is true, what are the advantages (pros) of short-term missions' involvement?

One advantage is that these short-term trips do foster the spiritual growth of the participants. While many may never serve long-term, these trips do help participants get a glimpse of God's work around the world, spurring them to a stronger prayer and financial support of long-term missionaries and the global Christian community.

Short-term mission trips, if appropriately planned and implemented, can effectively assist long-term missionaries, local workers and local churches among the targeted people group. Such trips must have a goal more than just personal evangelism, but should include follow-up with the intent of seeing new church plants. Sometimes, the initial follow-up and gathering of new believers can be done by the short-term teams, but more often than not this task has to

fall to the long-term missionaries and local believers. Before a church sends a short-term team, it should inquire about the plans for follow-up and church planting with those already on the field. If there is none, the church should not send the team. Great harm is done to kingdom work when there are evangelistic efforts but lack of follow-up and follow-through.

Short-term teams should never go to the field with their own agenda, but rather the team should be willing to serve within the parameters of the field strategy of the long-term workers and local churches (if there are any). Short-term teams should always defer to the long-term missionaries and local churches, even when they might not agree with them. Remember, these folks understand the culture, the language and the context better than the short-term team members. Also, remember that as short-term team members we are there to learn and serve, and only as we take such a posture can we truly be of help. Short-term teams that go with their own agenda can do great harm to the effort of reaching a people group with the gospel.

While there are some advantages, there are also some problems that can occur with short-term teams. I have already mentioned above the danger of a team going to the field with their own agenda. Another major potential problem involves money. Short-term teams from North America are, in most places around the world, are viewed as filthy rich (and in comparison to most, we are!). Couple this with the short-term team's encounter with poverty as never witnessed before can lead team members to distribute money and material resources without considering the impact this can have. Let's face the truth – most North Americans believe that money is the answer to poverty, but in reality, poverty is not solved simply by throwing money at the problem. If the missionaries on the field tell the team, "Please do not hand out money," then listen to them. I could write an entire book (and perhaps I should) on how well-meaning North Americans have brought harm to mission work through their disregard (consciously or unconsciously) of the negative impact their giving of money to local individuals and people can have.

Many of you who read this month's newsletter are or will be involved in short-term mission trips. My prayer is that these few paragraphs will give some insight as to how your short-term trip can effectively serve the kingdom work where you are or will be going. The list from Howard Culbertson (above) can also be of great benefit to your team as you prepare.



<http://www.worldimpact-rbc.blogspot.com/>

Missions Department News:

- ☪ **Bridges One Day** is a special conference on sharing the Christian hope with Muslims
 - o It will take place on March 6th from 9:00am to 4:00pm at First Alliance Church
 - o The conference will feature Fouad Masri from the Crescent Project
 - o Fouad will equip believers to understand and engage Islamic communities
 - o The conference will cost \$20 for students, \$27 for pre-registered individuals, \$50 for couples, and \$35 at the door
 - o You can register for the conference at www.crescentproject.org/louisville

- ☪ **Hindu Contextualization:** Boyce Missions Link will be hosting a conference on contextualization among high caste Hindus on Saturday March 27th in Boyce Chapel. Further details will be announced in next month's newsletter and via student email.

- ☪ **World Impact Center 2010 Mission Trips:**

The World Impact Center has already scheduled the two mission trips for the summer of 2010! There will be a North America trip and an international trip. The summer of 2010 seems so far away, but students can begin praying and planning for which trip they feel led to join.

First, Dr. Kerns will lead another team to Utah in the summer 2010 to minister to members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. As you know, Dr. Kerns is Boyce College's resident expert on ministering to Mormons. We will be looking for at least 6 students who would be willing to invest a week or so of their time to learn about and be a part of ministry to Mormons.

The second trip is equally as exciting, and perhaps even more challenging. The World Impact Center is looking for students who want to venture to one of the most needy areas and some of the least reached peoples in South America. No, we are not planning to go up the Amazon or wander deep into the Andes Mountains. Instead, we are looking for a team of students to go to the Foz de Iguazu (Falls of Iguazu), an area of South America where Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay share borders. This area is populated with peoples of Arab and Chinese descent as well as other unreached peoples. Journey with Dr. Carlton to this unique area of South America where we will have the opportunity to witness and minister to people who desperately need to hear the Good News.

CS Crossings Camps & Hands On: Crossings Camps is now partnering with the International Mission Board's Hands On program. Students who serve one summer with Crossings will be automatically accepted into Hands On and provided a 50% scholarship towards the program. Up to 12 credit hours are also offered through Hands On including the missions internship requirement.

CS Internship: If you are planning to do your missions internship this summer you will need to make an appointment with Dr Carlton as soon as possible to begin the process. The sooner you begin arranging details the less likely you are to encounter problems as the summer approaches. Remember certain pre-requisites must be completed and all field supervisors and job descriptions must be approved.

Boyce Highlight:

My first and only overseas mission trip was a short one. Last summer I had the opportunity to go with a group of Boyce students led by Dr. Carlton to Agra, India for two weeks. Leading up to the trip, I thought that two weeks would be a fairly large amount of time. As I reflected back on the whole experience after I returned home, I realized that two weeks really was not long at all, especially when four of those days were spent traveling. It is comical, as I look back on it now, because I broke down halfway through those two weeks and was absolutely ready to go home. As it was my first mission trip, I found that it was difficult emotionally, physically, and spiritually; however, I am so thankful for the whole experience because I learned so much, and it was such a blessing to be a part of an encouraging and godly team.

Even though I do not have any other trips with which to compare, there are several things I loved about the short term trip as well as a few negatives. Since it was my first mission trip, it was good that it was short. Another positive was the fact that I was with a strong, unified team. We were there with the intention of sharing the gospel and meeting persons of peace, so knowing that the people we shared with would be followed up on

by other believers after we left was heartening.

On the negative side, two weeks was not long enough to get past culture shock. Sadly, I was still in culture shock when it was time to leave, so I did not get to a point where I truly appreciated the culture of India. Also, it was expensive for such a short amount of time. Despite this, I think a short term mission trip with a solid team is a great experience, especially for a first-time overseas experience.

-Chloe Vanlandingham

One of the pros of short term work that I have seen is that having friends from America visiting is a good excuse for long term workers to visit and share with nationals. Also, volunteers can be more forth right about proclamation in sensitive contexts- because if they get kicked out no big deal!

One of the cons is that carelessness and cultural insensitivity can have lasting repercussions. Also, the limited experience a short term trip provides can give volunteers a misled sense of expertise. It's important to never abandon the role of a servant-learner.

-Michael Butterworth

Prayer Requests:

- CB* Churches all over the country are organizing disaster relief teams on their way to Haiti. Pray for these individuals and churches to meet both physical and spiritual needs of Haitians.
- CB* Pray for Haitian believers around the world as they mourn the loss of loved ones and seek to proclaim the message of Christ in this tragedy.
- CB* Be praying for the students who will serve short-term this year, and whether you should be one of them.