

Introduction to Missions
Samples of *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* article reviews

Sample 1

Friesen, Randy. "The Long-term Impact of Short-term Missions." *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*. October. 2005: 448-454.

This article begins with a discussion of Friesen's time in Kenya and some of the interactions he witnessed between Massai and Canadian students in a student exchange program for discipleship training. He discussed that "some team members were discouraged that they had not 'accomplished' more," (449) which he finds to be a common emotion among "short-termers." He then found out, seven years later, that the church the short-termers helped to plant had a congregation of over 300 members! Intrigued by this phenomenon, Friesen decided to do his doctoral work about proving, statistically, the long-term impact of short-term missions. The rest of the article discusses his research methodology and some of his main research results.

Among his findings, I found the most fascinating to be that among short-term missions participants, there tends to be a decline in their church relationship after their experience and female participants tend to experience greater spiritual growth. Based on my experiences with short term work and witness trips, I have found both of these to be true. Friesen also found that pre-field discipleship leads to a higher score of overall change. I definitely agree with him concerning this matter, and I applaud many of the outlets for sending Nazarene short-termers in providing an opportunity to do this before one leaves on a cross-cultural ministerial experience. He, throughout the article, discusses other findings but concludes the article with ways that churches and missions organizations can be helpful in facilitating positive growth-promoting work and witness experiences.

In his suggestions, I found that his tip that "we must do more to debrief and follow up with short-term mission participants" to be very applicable to my life and the lives of other short-termers I know. I really feel that, in my major short-term experience, to Africa this past summer, that there was an inadequate amount of debriefing that took place upon return. Without knowledge of the different ways that I could do this, I found the adjustment from the plane to my summer job as a Girl Scout camp counselor to a bit rocky. I am glad, however, that authors, like this one, are trying to raise awareness of the necessity of debriefing with short-term work and witness experiences because I do feel that it is a major issue that is not addressed as often as it should be.

Overall, the author does a good job of highlighting both the positive and negative aspect of short-term missions, and I think, reveals some good information that all shorttermers should be aware of. His research seemed very valid, and by reading his article, I feel inspired to further investigate the importance of short-term mission work.

Other articles in this publication include...

Hornell, J. Scott. "Doing Theology: An International Risk."

Borges, James. "A Muslim Theology of Jesus' Virgin Birth and His Death."

Mofitt, Robert. "Transformation: Dream or Reality?"

Sample 2

I read the article titled, "The Long-term Impact of Short-term Missions," by Randy Friesen, which can be found in the October 2005 edition of *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*. The author of this article did research on the many positive effects short-term mission trips have on the people who take part in them and the people that the mission trip is directed towards. Often many people feel discouraged because they believe they could have done more if it had been a long-term amount of service. I think that often short-term mission trips are seed planting. They have a much deeper and longer lasting effect than what you may see at the end of the short trip. The author takes the example of a group of students who went to an area in Africa and did some work, they left discouraged thinking they could have done more. Seven years later, the author returns to Africa for a seminar and finds the man who had hosted the group and finds out that there is a church now in the city they worked in with over 300 members. Short-term missions also has an effect on those who are a part of them. I enjoyed every moment I was in Mexico for Commission Unto Mexico and it's my small way of being a missionary. Short-term mission work is usually what most people can do, since not everyone is called to be a full time missionary.

Some other articles in this edition include: "A New Opportunity and Challenge," "Let's Get Real About Missionary Team Chemistry," and "Missionary Medicine in a Changing World."

Sample 3

Parrot, Don. "Managing the Short-Term Missions Explosion." *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*. July 2004. pp. 356- 360.

This article dealt with the increase of short term missions and its negative and positive effects for the long term missions strategy. Short term mission trips can suck a lot of financial resources away from other needs. As more and more churches get involved in short term trips and projects, they may redirect giving from other areas. As people begin to get excited about short term missions the fear is that people will be less willing to prepare for career service. Short term teams can also pose many problems for field workers. The team must be housed and cared for and supervised. One of the other negative effects of short term missions is that it can sometimes move the focus of missions away from the ultimate goals. Some perceive that we are reinterpreting the Great Commission as "Go into all the world and build small block houses, painting them, finishing them, and commissioning them in my name and lo I will be with you always even until the end of the trip" (358).

Despite all of these negative issues involved with the short term missions boom many positives have also resulted. First, as more people gain hands on experience on the mission field they will be more inclined to give and support missions all their lives than if a missionary is something far away that they cannot relate to or understand. Short-term missions allows churches to be more connected with the missionaries that they support. There are broadening opportunities for outreach using these short term teams. If teams can be effectively used, the possibilities for ministry on the field can be expanded. Lastly, some of the people who go on short term mission trips will sense a call to full-time missions.

As someone who has been on short term mission trips, I think that they have been very

valuable experiences. I have known many people who have been greatly impacted to support missions through an experience on a short term mission trip. However, I also see the danger of become "mission trip minded" rather than "missions minded". Short term missions must be integrated into the long term missions strategy. The two parts of the missions program must work together to accomplish the ultimate goal of world evangelism.

Other articles in this issue included "New Paradigms for Understanding Hinduism and Contextualization," "What I Want in a Missionary," "Leadership Models for the Suffering Church," and "Should Christians Use `Allah' in Bible Translations?"