



The Guide to Best Practice in Short-term Mission

**Evangelical Fellowship of
Canada**

A Guide to Best Practice in Short-term Mission

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	3
Introduction	4
Chapter 1. Where Are We? And How Did We Get Here?	6
Chapter 2. You're Spending How Much? For How Short a Time?	9
Chapter 3. The UK Connection	13
Chapter 4. Best Practice, Already in Practice!	14
Chapter 5. The Code of Best Practice in Short-term Mission	19
Chapter 6. Bibliography and Resources	25
Chapter 7. Appendix	28
Chapter 8 EFC Task Force for Global Mission	29

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Geoff Tunnicliffe, Chair
Task Force for Global Mission
Evangelical Fellowship of Canada
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Introduction

In April 1975 I embarked on a journey that would change my life. For several years before that, as a student I had been actively involved in evangelistic ministry in Vancouver, British Columbia. Through a coffee house outreach and street ministry at the height of the “Jesus people” movement we saw many lives transformed by the gospel. However, I had a passion to see even more people come to know Christ.

That’s when I heard about a one-year mission trip to Belize, in Central America. It sounded like a great adventure and an opportunity to serve God in another country. I jumped at the chance. I thought it would be a good possibility to do something exciting before I settled down to get a “real” job. Though I received some positive encouragement from my home church, some fine Christian leaders wondered out loud about the value of such an endeavour.

After completing several months of training, along with several others, I left on our one-year mission to this small, tropical country.

Our goal as a team was to work in cooperation with several national churches in Belize to conduct evangelistic outreaches. It was exciting to see God at work through our team as we led hundreds of people to Christ. However, along with the great blessings we also saw significant tensions arise between the host churches and our team. Cultural faux pas, misunderstandings and lack of maturity caused a rift. By God’s grace we were able to restore the relationships with the church leaders. During that first year I learned much about myself, interpersonal relationships, team building, cross-cultural sensitivities and the power of the gospel.

Toward the end of those 12 months in Belize I was considering my options for the future. I was giving serious consideration to staying in Belize for another year. Then a major earthquake occurred in the neighbouring country of Guatemala. Along with two of my team-mates, I rushed in to help the victims of this natural disaster. Twenty-seven thousand people were dead, hundreds of thousands injured and homeless. The need seemed overwhelming. Within days of the earthquake, dozens of short-term teams arrived to help.

For me the time in Guatemala became a life-defining moment. I had never seen that kind of destruction and death up close. As I thought about the loss of life, I determined before the Lord that I would commit myself to His purposes and to seeing His gospel taken to the ends of the earth.

I ended up staying in Belize for an additional year, then I returned home to marry a short-term missionary I had met during my missionary training course. After several months at home we went to the Caribbean to lead a church-planting effort.

During our several years on the island of St. Lucia we used short-term mission teams as a key element in our overall strategy to plant churches and assist existing churches. Dozens of teams came on terms from two weeks up to two years at a time. In addition, after a major hurricane short-termers helped those who had been devastated and left homeless. Since that time I have had the opportunity to lead many more short-term teams to other parts of the world. While these teams have made a significant contribution for the cause of Christ, the greatest impact has been on the personal lives of the participants themselves.

Am I a believer in short-term mission? You bet. There are significant benefits for engaging in short-term mission. I have seen short-termers gain a new vision for God and what He is doing in the world. I have seen others who determined that long-term mission work was or was not a part of their long-term life plan. Short-term mission teams have also inspired a mission vision in both sending and receiving local churches.

In fact, in a recent research project among Canadian churches we uncovered some interesting data about the impact of short-term mission.

When we compared churches that have a growing mission program and those that do not, we discovered some interesting differences. Simply put, churches that have seen growth in the past five years have short-term mission teams high on their agenda.

In addition, when we looked at the relationship between mission education and sending missionaries, we discovered that churches that have not sent out a missionary in the past five years correlate least with youth missions programs or projects and with short-term mission trips. However, churches that have sent missionaries in the past five years correlate most with short-term mission teams.

This means the best thing a church can do, if it wants to send long-term missionaries, is send short-term missionaries. If a church wants to send long-term missionaries, the worst thing it can do is not send short-term missionaries.

It is evident that some Canadian churches are taking advantage of this remarkable opportunity. From 1992 to 1996 the number of short-term missionaries sent from Canada grew by 36 percent. The projections for the future are that the number of short-termers will increase significantly.

As Evangelical Fellowship of Mission Agencies president Paul McKaughan says, "Whatever one's perspective, the trend toward short-term engagement is here to stay, and will alter the way we do mission in the twenty-first century."

One pastor recently declared, "Short-term mission is the only hope for the future involvement in missions because presently eighty percent of mission support comes from a generation that is dying off. Short-term teams are bringing back the excitement in missions."

A boomer generation leader said, "The only hope for the compassion-depleted church is short-term missions."

However, not all short-mission experiences are created equal. There are a growing number of people whose short-term experience fell far short of their expectations. This can only have a negative effect on a person's attitude toward global mission. It can also impact the view of the local church on this strategy.

If we believe that positive short-term experiences can help increase global mission involvement, then it is essential that we improve the overall quality of our programs. This reality provides the impetus and the backdrop for developing the Code of Best Practice in Short-term Mission.

During the past 15 months the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada has worked with leaders across Canada to develop this Code. The agencies and local churches that developed this tool were motivated by their desire that God be glorified in all we do. They recognized their responsibility toward all participants and partners in the programs: to serve them to the highest standards possible. The Code does not necessarily indicate current achievement, but rather represents aspirations toward high standards in short-term mission practice. Nonetheless, some minimum accomplishments are implied in the Code.

It is our hope and prayer that this new Code will help "raise the bar" for the short-term mission effort in Canada, which in turn will have a powerful impact on local churches in Canada and host partners around the world.

Geoff Tunnicliffe, Chair,
Evangelical Fellowship of Canada's Task Force for Global Mission

Chapter 1

Where Are We? And How Did We Get Here?

The world has seen a tremendous rise in the number and variety of short-term missions. In 1986 *Christianity Today* published an article entitled “Are short-term volunteers the way of the future?” (1) The numbers would seem to indicate that the future has arrived, and that short-termers are here to stay.

From the beginning of the short-term movement in the late 1950s there has been a rapid increase, to the point that short-termers today number in the hundreds of thousands. In the 1973 *MARC Mission Handbook*, surveys indicate that between 3,000 and 5,000 people were involved in short-term missions in the early 1970s. (2) Estimates in the '90s range from 250,000 to 450,000 participants.

The increase has not only forced many in the missions world to reconsider the place of short-termers in the missions enterprise, but the whole term itself is having to be redefined. In the most recent *MARC Mission Handbook* (1998-2000 edition), there are two categories that could be considered short-term. One is from two weeks to one year; the other is from one to four years. Surveys indicate that the number of people serving from two weeks to one year in 1992 was just under 39,000. By 1996 that number had jumped to just under 64,000. (3) One has to keep in mind that these numbers are not exhaustive. Not every missions agency was involved in the survey, and with the recent increase in the number of churches sending out their own missions teams, that number could easily be many times higher. As well, we need to remember that this covers only the North American picture, not taking into account the vast numbers of short-termers going out from the rest of the world. The short-term phenomenon is not restricted to North America.

Whatever the numbers, and whatever the precise definition of a short-term mission, the reality is that short terms have seen explosive growth in the past decade, both in numbers of participants and amount of publicity. The signs indicate no slowing down. One example is that one of the leading missions publications, *Mission Frontiers*, published by the U.S. Center for World Mission, devoted its January 2000 edition to short-term missions.

What are some of the major causes for the dramatic increase in the number of people taking part in short-term missions? There appear to be four major factors: the variety of opportunities, technological factors, economic factors and generational issues.

Variety of Opportunities

The first reason for the rise in the number of short-termers is the wide variety of opportunities for short-term service. Though missions at one time may have consisted mainly of pioneer evangelism and church planting, there are now countless types of ministries. These include medical missions, construction teams, prayer walks, English outreach camps and teaching English in schools. As well, individuals can offer seminars on any number of topics, ranging from business to agriculture. Relief work is common, as is traveling by ship to ports of call.

This has made short terms available to almost anyone. No longer does one require a seminary or Bible college degree to qualify for cross-cultural ministry. Sometimes language studies are not required and pretty well anyone with an interest in missions has the opportunity to use their talents or abilities in a short-term ministry setting.

Technological Factors

A second reason for the increase in short-term missions is the advancement in the world of technology. Getting to the field is no longer a month- or two-month-long adventure. With air travel, you can get almost anywhere in the world within a day, which has opened up the world to short-term ministries.

Economic Factors

In the past several decades the standard of living and the amount of disposable income on hand for North Americans has increased. As a result, churches are able to send more youth or adult ministry teams for short-term ministries. Air travel is no longer solely for the wealthy class.

Generational Factors

Though it's dangerous to generalize, there appear to be some tendencies among the past few generations that have led to the rise in short-term missions. Two of these generations have been called the Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964) and the Baby Busters (1964-1983). (There are many variations as to what years of birth actually denote these two generations, but these two groupings fall in line with widespread opinion.)

Numerous characteristics among these two groups lend themselves to short-term missions.

1. Attuned to career change

With the changes in society, many people now expect to undergo numerous career changes. This view has made its way into the world of missions as well. Whereas lifetime service used to be the expectation, there is now a sense that missions is another thing that can be done during one's lifetime, not necessarily having to lead to a lifetime of service. As well, many who are thinking of going into career missions prefer to have the chance to "test" the missions field, going on a short-term trip before making a longer-term commitment, to see if this is where the Lord is actually leading. There is a decrease in long-term commitment of almost every kind, with missions not being exempt from this trend.

2. Focused on specialization

The boomers in particular have become specialized in their fields, with very particular skills and abilities. Combining this with the increase in opportunities on the mission field, it's no surprise that boomers like the opportunity to go to the mission field for a short period of time, use their skills in kingdom work, and return home.

3. Desiring to use spiritual gifts

The use of spiritual gifts has become an increasingly important factor in missions. The boomers in particular desire the opportunity to use their spiritual gifts, and they seek out short-term opportunities in which their gifts can be used to the fullest ability.

4. Experience oriented

Praying for and supporting missionaries on the field, while a good thing, often is not enough for the younger generations. They are very experience oriented, and want to see, touch, taste and feel the work on the field. The actual experience of going to the field and seeing first hand what is happening is often the greatest mobilizer for giving, praying and sending.

5. Relationship oriented

Perhaps as a backlash to the rampant individualism of previous generations, the busters in particular place a very high value on relationships. As a result, going on short-term missions as part of a team fits in very well with this outlook. More and more churches are sending short-term teams in response to the desire for an experience and opportunity to build relationships, which are valued highly among the younger generation.

Again, it's important to note that these are some generalizations, and not every baby boomer or buster (many even resent those terms) will have these characteristics or preferences. But these are some general trends in outlook on life that have led to a dramatic rise in the number of participants in short-term missions.

Chapter 2

You're Spending How Much? For How Short a Time?

The title of an article by missions leader Paul Borthwick in the October 1996 issue of the missions journal *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* asks a question that many are still asking today: "Short-term youth teams: Are they worth it?" (1)

There are many concerns regarding the perceived shortcomings of short-term missions. Part of the reason for this perception is that there have been too many instances of teams ill prepared, culturally insensitive, inflexible and unwilling to work with the host. Too many teams took not only their suitcases, but also their own agendas to the field. But does the fact that there have been some poorly organized short-term teams require that we abandon completely the short-term missions enterprise? No, not at all. Rather, we should seek to address the shortcomings, display better stewardship and plan more effectively.

By evaluating some of the concerns arising from poor short-term experiences, we can examine how following the Code of Best Practice can help us accomplish the goal of making the most out of short-term missions.

A survey by STEM Ministries would seem to strengthen the evidence of the beneficial nature of short-term ministries. The 1999 publication *Can Short-term Mission Really Create Long-term Career Missionaries?* a survey by Daniel P. McDonough and Roger P. Peterson, concluded that those who had participated in STEM's short-term mission program reported significant increases in the amount of time in missions-related prayer, giving and openness to long-term career service.(2) Short-term ministries can be a great blessing; yet there are concerns.

What are the concerns?

1. Cost

This is perhaps the first area of concern that arises when short-term missions are proposed. Some people ask why we spend money sending people for two weeks when full-time people often have difficulty raising their support? Are we getting enough of a return for the kind of funding that is being poured into short-term missions? Are we being good stewards with the resources we have been given?

2. Limited impact

The impact of short-term missions is questioned. How much impact can a team have when they are unfamiliar with the culture and perhaps ignorant of the local language? If the key to change is interpersonal relationships, and those relationships take a long time to form, how much influence can a team actually expect to have during two weeks on the field?

3. Wrong motivations

Questions are often asked as to why people engage in short-term missions. Are they going simply to appease their consciences? Do they feel as if participating in one short-term trip means they have fulfilled their commitment to the Great Commission? As well, some view short-term missions as nothing

more than a glorified vacation and an opportunity to visit an exotic part of the world and have someone else pay for it. It gives others a chance just to get away from home.

4. Cultural insensitivity

A poorly prepared team that does not respect or understand local traditions and customs can often undo work that the full-time missionary has spent years developing. Combine insensitivity with inflexibility, and after the team leaves, the local missionary is left to pick up the pieces and try to undo the damage.

5. Burden to the national church or local missionary

Career workers are often already overloaded with responsibilities, and may have to put their own ministries on hold in order to host a team. The short-term team can often be seen as more of a curse than a blessing. Career missionaries can sometimes spend the summer babysitting, as opposed to moving ahead in their own ministries.

6. Limited benefit

One of the biggest criticisms directed toward short terms is that it benefits only those who go. They are the ones who get the most out of it, while their impact on the field is very limited. The ministry does more for those who go than for those who receive the team.

7. Inadequate picture of what missions is like

Some people return from short-term trips feeling that they have a complete picture of what missions is really like, after having spent two weeks on the field. In spite of not having had to deal with local authorities, language-learning frustrations, homesickness or other struggles experienced by the full-time people, some short-termers feel they are now ready to go full time after having had a taste of missions. This can lead to some workers' gaining a false sense of security regarding God's call on their lives.

These are some of the more common criticisms levelled against short-term missions. In preparing a Code of Best Practice, there has been an effort to address these potential shortcomings. If adhered to, the Code can address many of these issues.

Addressing the concerns

1. The cost

There will always be questions regarding the cost, but by asking some of the serious questions in the planning stages, we can turn the money spent on short-term missions into an investment with long-term returns, rather than wasting money on something of no value.

In planning a short-term trip, questions need to be asked in connection with Section 1 of the Code of Best Practice, dealing with aims and objectives. Does the short-term mission have a defined purpose? Are there realistic and clear aims and objectives? How does the short-term mission serve the long-term objectives of all those involved? Is it tied into an existing ministry, in which follow-up is in place, so the ministry can continue after the team returns home? What steps are being taken to ensure that there is adequate debriefing upon re-entering the home culture, in order to encourage the participants to a greater involvement in their local churches, praying for missions and giving? (Section 4).

By following the Code on these issues, a missions trip can be well planned with realistic expectations,

leading to not only a greater accomplishment on the field, but greater involvement at home by participants after their return.

2. Limited impact

In the pre-field planning stage, there are questions that once again need to be asked. What are the aims and objectives of the trip? How much can realistically be accomplished by a short-term team? A short-term mission, when well planned, with a well-prepared team, can be a tremendous catalyst to an existing ministry. The national church can be encouraged and a team can bring a sense of excitement and enthusiasm that can potentially be a tremendous blessing to the career people on the field. There are limits, and these need to be acknowledged; but at the same time, with proper planning and communication between participants, and realistic evaluation of the potential impact, short terms can be very effective.

3. Wrong motivations

Section 2 of the Code deals with the selection process. If there is a suitable process in place, it can help weed out those who are going for the wrong motivations, whether just to see another part of the world or simply appease a guilty conscience. In Section 1 there is information on appropriate sending-church involvement. If the sending church is involved and there is adequate screening in place, the correct questions can be asked and candidates screened to determine who should be going, and who shouldn't.

4. Cultural insensitivity

A couple of sections deal with this issue. Section 2 addresses orientation, recommending both pre-field and on-field orientation. Section 3 details issues of lines of authority and supervision. Participants are expected to follow guidelines on behaviour and relationships that are appropriate to the host culture. Though cultural mistakes may still occur, if there is an effort on the part of those involved in pre-field and on-field training the chances of making critical mistakes is greatly reduced.

5. Burden to missionaries or local church

Sections 1.3 and 1.4 examine the issue of benefits and responsibilities of all parties involved, including expectations and priorities. Communication is a critical component. If there is good communication between those at home and those on the field, concerns and expectations can be addressed. As in most areas of a short-term mission, organizers must take initiative to ensure that these steps occur. We must be intentional in our actions, because good communication between home and field doesn't just happen by itself.

6. Limited benefit

When people pour their lives into a short-term ministry, including giving up vacations or spending time in fund-raising activities, and devote their time to serving others, God will more than likely bless those efforts. There's nothing wrong with being blessed while serving the Lord. Those who go often learn a lot, and *get* more out of the trip than they give. But at the same time, by adhering to the section on aims and objectives, we can examine how we expect the host culture/host church to benefit from the ministry. Steps can then be taken to make the most of the ministry, so that everyone involved will benefit. All involved need to be proactive to work toward the desired results.

7. Inaccurate picture of what missions is like

Section 4 (re-entry and debriefing), explains the importance of having those involved discuss the experience. Issues such as what God has done and how this experience will lead to greater involvement in one's home church can be discussed, along with how a short-term mission differs from full-time service on the field.

There is simply no way of ensuring success (as one defines success in Christian ministry) when planning a short-term mission, but by seeking to meet the standards in the Code of Best Practice, those involved can move toward doing the best job possible in assuring that ministries are well planned and address the needs and concerns of all involved. All the while, there must be the recognition that anything good that comes out of a short-term ministry is because of the grace and power of God.

Chapter 3

The UK Connection

How did the EFC Code of Best Practice come into being?

This EFC Code is not a uniquely Canadian idea, but rather has its roots in the United Kingdom.

In early 1997 the Evangelical Missionary Alliance (EMA) in the UK took steps toward helping organizations achieve the highest possible standards with their short-term mission programs. They sought a series of standards that would not only address the needs of the organizers of short-term missions, but also consider the needs of host churches and communities. It would cover all visits, experiences, teams and placements up to two years in duration, originating from the UK.

The six-month process began with a day-long forum involving 80 people from 60 agencies and churches. That was followed by two draft copies and feedback by mail, eventually leading to a code that has been adopted thus far by 52 agencies.

The EFC Code of Best Practice evolved in a similar manner. In February of 1999 representatives from a number of missions agencies and churches attended an initial meeting in Vancouver. A similar meeting followed in Toronto two weeks later. The EFC sought input from central and western Canada to build toward national consensus.

At these regional round-table discussions, missions representatives began by examining the EMA Code of Best Practice. They used that as a foundation, making changes or additions that would suit the Canadian context. Recommendations rising out of the two meetings were then synthesized. These recommendations and a rating form were then sent to 200 missions leaders for further analysis and input. These results were re-evaluated and synthesized once more, with the final product being the EFC Code of Best Practice.

The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada Global Task Force on Mission officially adopted the Code, whereupon it was sent to missions agencies and churches, who were also asked to officially adopt the Code.

Chapter 4

Best Practice, Already in Practice!

The Code of Best Practice is a guideline for churches and missions agencies to follow in order to make the most of their short-term ministries. Most of the suggestions are not new, in fact many agencies and churches are already applying principles found in the Code. We examine who is doing what, in regard to the four areas of the Code.

1. Aims and Objectives

The first section, Aims and Objectives, seeks to ensure that the reason for involvement in any short-term ministry has been seriously thought through. When approached by a church youth group seeking to do a short-term ministry, one missions leader always asks a question that needs to be asked: “Why? Why do you want to go on this kind of ministry?” The response “Because everyone else is doing it” is not adequate.

Aims and Objectives

The key issue in this area is that the short-term ministry must be *well thought out!* Several questions need to be answered in this area: How does this fit into the overall ministry of the local church? How does this serve the long-term objectives of the individual? How does the ministry benefit the ongoing work of the host?

The needs and objectives of all parties need to be clearly communicated and defined. Personal growth, expanded world view and the opportunity to use and develop spiritual gifts are among the aims and objectives for team members. Among agencies, Youth With a Mission’s Urban Mission goal is to educate the group to the challenges of an urban setting and encourage people to become involved long term.

In regard to the needs of the host, Calgary-based Venture Teams International always works with existing ministries, as those on the field have the best knowledge of where teams can most effectively support an ongoing ministry.

TEAM Serve members, like many teams, are always placed in close proximity with field missionaries, not sent out on their own during their two- to twelve-month ministries. One example of clear objectives is that of short-term ministries in Lublin, Poland. The objective here, as in countless ministries, is to expand contacts for the church by developing relationships with nationals and then to draw them into the church.

The Georgia-based short-term organization Culture Link, in its training manual *Help! We’re going on a short-term trip*, includes a chart called “Maximum Impact Short-term Missions.” This one-page chart, produced by R. Wayne Sneed of Memphis, details the ways in which all three parties involved in the ministry – the goers, senders and host, (sent, sender, recipient) – can be impacted and involved during the pre-field, on-field and post-field stages. By plotting on paper, team leaders can address the needs and expectations of all parties involved, and how all groups can be positively influenced during all stages of the ministry.(1) (See appendix for one variation on how this graph can be used.)

Partnerships

One of the major trends in missions these days is the development of partnerships. Partnerships are

abounding among agencies and denominations. There is a growing movement toward partnerships among North Americans and organizations from other countries. The following are some examples of partnerships in the short-term movement:

Centre Street Church in Calgary fully supports a missionary couple in Mexico, who in turn are partnering with a South American organization. Instead of going it alone, the church can gain direction from, and rely upon the expertise of, the national organization to fulfil the vision of planting churches. Many of the church's 100 short-termers in 1998 worked on ten-day to two-week ministries in Mexico.

SEND International follow a very simple guideline in sending short-term teams: they won't go unless they are invited. There must be an invitation from the national church, and the team needs to be meeting a real and immediate need of the national church. For example, in the ministry in Amursk, Russia, the church makes a proposal as to where a team can fit in, and the team opens doors where nationals can't in terms of relationships.

The Christian and Missionary Alliance has seen church growth through a partnership with the national church called "Church Partnership Evangelism." Working with the national church in Latin America and Asia, Canadian church leaders and lay people go on a 10-day to two-week trip to be involved in outreach and visitation. Visiting friends of nationals, Canadians are able to share their Christian life and experience, with the national church in place to do the follow-up ministry.

Sending-Church Involvement

One area in ministry that has been the cause of some tension in recent years is that of the relationship between the local church and the missions agency. There is now a movement toward seeking greater involvement from the local church from beginning to end.

SIM has a two-week to two-year program called Short-term Associates. The desire for increased local-church influence is apparent in their bulletin advertising the opportunity: "If you find the idea of serving Christ overseas challenging, the first step toward service is to talk with your pastor and members of your church. Ask them to pray with you and advise you about participation. Their encouragement, evaluation, and support in prayer and finances will be vital to your mission experience."

Several years ago International Teams, like many other agencies, came to the realization that the church wants to be an authentic partner in the whole process. Recognizing that those who go on short-terms are an extension of the local ministry of the church, this agency works with the local church in the area of pre-field training. The agency gives the local church a full training program for team leaders and members; the church is responsible to do the training. While the agency provides materials, help and consulting, the responsibility is on the local church to involve as many people as possible in the project. The input of the local church is sought even in the application process. When someone applies, International Teams sends the forms to church leaders, ensuring local church involvement from the beginning.

Local church involvement doesn't include only pre-field support, but many agencies will contact the local church after the ministry to make them aware of any unresolved issues in the lives of team members that have come up during debriefing.

2. Publicity, Selection and Orientation

The second section deals with the issues of publicity, selection and orientation.

Publicity needs to be carried out with integrity. There needs to be an adequate screening and selection process in place in order to discern who should be going on the short-term ministry, and who should either stay home or wait another year. As well, there needs to be good pre-field orientation so that the team is as well prepared as possible upon arrival.

Publicity

Our advertising must be honest, not promising something that cannot be delivered. Wycliffe Bible Translators has what is called a “Discovery Program,” a six- to eight-week program for 19- to 35-year-olds. The advertising for the program notes that “Discovery offers you the opportunity to investigate missions and help out where possible.” Very realistic, not promising something it can’t deliver.

At the same time, advertising must not reflect negatively upon the host culture. North Americans have often been criticized for being triumphalist, and sometimes our publications can reflect this bias. “Take Christ to Russia” sounds like an exciting prospect, but it can be offensive when we consider that Christ has been present in Russia for a thousand years through the lives of believers, many of them demonstrating faith through times of persecution that would make our faith seem shallow by comparison.

Selection

While there are no guarantees that a short-term ministry will be trouble free, agencies and churches can take steps to be as discerning as possible as to who should be on the team. A well-thought-out selection and screening process must be in place.

Team leaders need to evaluate motivations so that team members go with an attitude of serving and giving, rather than focusing on what they can get out of the trip. As well, they need to consider issues such as health. One agency nearly ran into disaster when a summer worker almost fell off a roof during a construction project in Manila, coming close to serious injury. The person was helped off the roof by team-mates. The problem: diabetes, something no one on the team was aware of, simply because of a sloppy screening process.

Another agency dealt with the embarrassment and difficulty of having one of its team members go through drug withdrawal on the field. No one had bothered to check out references, which would have alerted team leaders that the person had a drug addiction.

Though not foolproof, a tighter screening process is a big step toward overcoming needless difficulties with team members.

Orientation

While some organizations prefer to do their training before going overseas, others prefer to do on-field orientation. Whether here or there, the key issue is preparing the team well for the ministry. Among the many areas for preparation are personal spiritual growth, cultural study to reduce insensitivity, language study and an examination of the historical and religious landscape of the destination.

Venture Teams International provides two months of intense training for their 11-month missions. This training includes a short North American tour, a re-evaluation time, and then more preparation time before going overseas. The six-week-long summer trips have ten days of training, including sessions on working cross culturally and developing conflict resolution skills.

The pre-field training for SEND International teams includes manuals for team members and the leader, who walks them through the process. There is also a third manual for on-field issues. While the team leader does much of the training, someone with the agency does the culture and language training.

Some agencies train here in Canada, others overseas; participants going for a year or more with Operation Mobilization receive both. Following the training session in Canada, they have a 10-day new-recruits conference in Germany or Holland, from which team members head out to their target fields.

Along with the preparation that agencies and churches do on their own, a new era in pre-field training is beginning with the introduction of two collaborative training programs. The AIM Centre, on the campus of Trinity Western University in Langley, B.C., and TIM Centre, on the campus of Tyndale College and Seminary in Toronto, both offer pre-field training programs for short-term missions in cooperation with a variety of agencies and churches.

3. Field Management and Pastoral Care

This section addresses the issues of who is in charge of what while on the field. Not knowing who is responsible for decision making and direction can lead to serious conflicts. The issue of pastoral care deals with ensuring that those who go on a short-term ministry are not left on their own to deal with personal struggles, but that there is an adequate support structure in place.

Field Management

When the lines of authority are not clearly communicated, there can be problems, such as in the situation with a team in Albania. The mission team was under the authority of the Christian organization's city director, who happened to be a non-Christian. The team was not aware of this until arriving at the destination, which not surprisingly led to a lot of tension over priorities. The result was what one team member called a "fiasco."

Another agency sent a team to the field trained to do drama, music and puppetry. Instead of using the team this way, the missionary involved showed films and gave the team the chance to do one skit while the film was being changed. This resulted in a conflict that has yet to be resolved. Circumstances like this can arise as a result of poor communication, when expectations and lines of authority are not clearly communicated or understood among all parties.

4. Re-entry Support, Evaluation and Program Development

One missions agency leader says the real work of short-term missions begins when team members arrive back home. Often short-termers feel the greatest impact when they have the chance to evaluate their experience and work through the issue of how it will influence the rest of their lives. With the vast majority of career missionaries having some form of short-term experience, the importance of debriefing cannot be overstated.

Re-entry and Debriefing

A cross-cultural experience can bring up issues in an individual's life that might remain untouched if the person were to remain in the familiarity and comfort zone of their own culture. The importance of debriefing cannot be overstated. In the days and weeks following the short-term ministry the sights,

smells, faces and memories are fresh in the hearts and minds of the participants. It is during these weeks following the ministry that God often speaks to individuals about the future and how the experience will influence the person both at home and perhaps in future cross-cultural ministry. The issue of how to integrate what has been seen and experienced into practical daily living needs to be addressed during debriefing. If such matters are not dealt with, all we are left with is some good memories.

Greater Europe Mission, with close to 3,000 people having gone to Europe under its EuroCorps program, has a five-day extensive debriefing program in Belgium for all summer teams. All summer team members must attend the debriefing, which is carried out by people trained specifically in this area. Personal problems that are evident in Canada are often exacerbated in a cross-cultural situation. As well, personal issues that may be hidden while living in Canadian culture can become apparent in a cross-cultural situation. If unresolved during the summer ministry, such issues are often dealt with during the week-long debriefing.

Another organization placing an emphasis on debriefing is Youth Mission International (YMI), the short-term mission arm of the Mennonite Brethren Church. With close to 800 short-termers going to six continents in the summer of 2000, YMI has put together an extensive debrief program ranging from two days for those going on 10-day ministries, to a week-long debrief for those taking part in the 8- to 10-month ministry.

Among the short-term teams sent out by Langley-based Trinity Western University are three teams in May. A week-long pre-field orientation at the beginning of May is one part of the training process. At the conclusion of the ministries is a three-day debriefing session. To get a bigger picture of who God is and what He is doing, all three teams come together at the WEC-affiliated Gateway Training for Cross Cultural Service centre in Langley. During this time all team members also meet individually with a mentor to work through the long version of their experience.

Evaluation and Program Development

A key ingredient to improving the effectiveness of short-term missions is to allow those involved to evaluate all aspects of the ministry. Many agencies have benefited greatly by paying attention to what people say upon returning from their experience.

Greater Europe Mission's extensive questionnaire has led to several changes. Concerns about the application process prompted a simplification of the steps, including making the process possible through e-mail. The standards have not been lowered, but the process has been made smoother.

Venture Teams International didn't send out Bible studies and prayer journals to applicants. However, some years ago some team members felt that many of the participants were there just because it was fun and exotic. One of the team members evaluated the ministry, mentioning that there needed to be more spiritual input. By making a change and requiring team members to fill out journals and Bible studies from the time of application until coming to training camp, it helped provide spiritual input to team members, along with weeding out those who were simply there for a good time.

Another agency, SEND International, heard from summer team members that there were not enough interpreters. Having only one interpreter for a group of 100 in their DVBS ministry, SEND is now dealing with the issue as a result of team evaluations. By having a mechanism that allows team members to evaluate their experience, agencies can ensure first-hand input to improve the quality of future ministries and potential for impact.

Chapter 5

The Code of Best Practice in Short-term Mission

Introduction

The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada Code of Best Practice in Short-term Mission is designed to apply to all visits, experiences, teams and placements of up to two years' duration, organized by Canadian mission agencies, churches and other organizations. Though formed initially with cross-cultural contexts in mind, it can apply to same-culture and cross-cultural situations in Canada and overseas.

It is a Code of Best Practice. Our motivation is based on our desire that God be glorified in all that we do. We also recognize our responsibility toward all participants and partners in our programs: to serve them to the highest standards possible. The Code does not necessarily indicate current achievement, but rather our aspirations toward high standards in short-term mission practice. Nonetheless some minimum accomplishments are implied in the Code. The Code is not intended to establish legal standards or liability. Adopting the Code should therefore be seen as a step in a process rather than an end in itself.

We recognize that not every situation permits a literal application of every element of the Code. For example, on rare occasions the involvement of a local church is not a reality. Nevertheless, it is desirable, and so must be included in a Code of Best Practice. In every case where literal application is impossible, consideration must be given to the question of who may have equivalent responsibilities.

In addition, this Code has some underlying core values, which include:

1. A commitment to culturally appropriate expressions of lifestyle and ministry activities.
2. A commitment to all the stakeholders in short-term mission, such as the participants, sending local church, mission agency, and host church and/or ministry.
3. A commitment to partnership and cooperation.
4. A commitment, wherever possible, to communicate among the stakeholders as early and as fully as possible.

Section 1: Aims and Objectives

- 1.1 A Short-term Mission program will have a defined purpose within Christian mission.
- 1.2 A Short-term Mission program will have clear and realistic aims and objectives, which include viability, expectations of outcomes, and consideration of how the program serves the long-term objectives of all those involved.
- 1.3 The benefits to, and responsibilities of, the participant, the sending organization, the sending local church, the host organization and the host local church will be clearly defined and communicated.
- 1.4 Partnerships will be established, as far as possible, with host local churches and communities. These relationships, in the context of unity and love, will be defined in terms of agreed-upon priorities, ownership, and expectations.
- 1.5 Appropriate sending local church involvement will be sought. A partnership will be developed, as far as is feasible, among the agency, participant and sending local church.
- 1.6 There will be a commitment to the participant to provide opportunities for personal and spiritual development throughout the experience.

Section 2: Publicity, Selection and Orientation

Publicity

- 2.1 Publicity materials will be accurate, truthful and used with integrity.
- 2.2 Publicity will clearly represent the ethos and vision of the sending organization. It will not reflect negatively on the host culture or ministry. It will also define the purpose of the program in the terms of service, discipleship and vocation.

Selection

- 2.3 The application process, including timeline, all financial obligations and use of funds, will be clear and thorough.
- 2.4 A suitable selection process will be established, including selection criteria and screening. A pastoral care element will be included, regardless of whether or not the individual is accepted as a short-term participant.
- 2.5 It is essential that there is disclosure of the relevant details concerning the short-term participant between the church, agency and field.

Orientation

- 2.6 Appropriate orientation and training will be given prior to departure, and/or after arrival on the field. Team leaders will be briefed on the orientation and training provided.
- 2.7 Preparatory information will be provided as early and as fully as possible.
- 2.8 Placement decisions and changes will be made with integrity and communicated clearly to all involved.

Section 3: Field Management and Pastoral Care

- 3.1 Clear task aims, objectives, and job descriptions will be developed jointly by the sending and hosting leadership.
- 3.2 Home- and field-based communication and reporting guidelines will be identified, implemented and reviewed.
- 3.3 Mutually defined lines of authority, supervision, communication, responsibility and accountability will be established and implemented through regular reporting and/or meetings.
- 3.4 Pastoral care and support structures will be provided, and respective responsibilities clarified with all parties.
- 3.5 Opportunities for spiritual, personal and character development will be provided, promoted and pursued.
- 3.6 Participants will agree to follow guidelines on behaviour, relationships and financial management that are appropriate to the host culture.
- 3.7 Policies and procedures covering finances, health care and insurance, medical contingencies, security and evacuation, acts of terrorism or political violence, stress management and conflict resolution, misconduct, discipline and grievances will be established, communicated and implemented as is appropriate.
- 3.8 Where and when requested, necessary equipping and training of hosts will be provided.

Section 4: Re-entry support, evaluation and program development

- 4.1 Re-entry debriefing and support will be seen as an integral part of the short-term package.
- 4.2 Re-entry preparation, including field evaluation, will begin prior to return.
- 4.3 The mission agency and sending local church will assist the participant through re-entry, including facing unresolved personal issues, and future opportunities and direction in discipleship and service.
- 4.4 Evaluation of the mission agency's procedures and performance will be filled out by the participant. (The agency's procedures will also be evaluated by the local sending church).
- 4.5 On the request of the host organization, an assessment of the host organization will be carried out in an appropriate way by the participant.
- 4.6 The results of evaluations will be communicated to relevant managers, for the improvement of future projects and the keeping of permanent records. Confidentiality, integrity and accuracy are required.

Adopting the Code

There is no suggestion that without this Code of Best Practice agencies and churches will not aim to develop their programs to the highest possible level. The Code does, however, provide guidelines and a means toward excellence. The aim of any implementation procedure is not to “police” the Code, but to support its aims of continual improvement, quality, high standards and excellence. Yet implementation must be a meaningful process, so as to avoid mere lip service, which undermines any value the Code may have.

The formal adoption and implementation procedure for the Code of Best Practice in Short-term Mission is as follows:

1. An agency/church will decide to formally “adopt” the Code, and advise the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada to that effect. We will then provide forms for completion.
2. There will be two signatories to the Code, one being the person responsible for running the short-term program(s), the other being an executive officer of the church/agency (e.g. chairman, CEO, senior pastor, etc).
3. Those who adopt the Code are encouraged to indicate this on all publicity and materials relating to their program(s), and must provide information about the Code to all participants.
- 4) Implementation includes the following commitments:
 - a) Adoptees will be represented at an annual EFC Short-term Mission Forum.
 - b) Before signing, active consideration will be given to how each section and element of the Code is currently being addressed by the agency/church.
 - c) There will be an active commitment to benchmark in every area of the Code. The EFC Task Force for Global Mission will assist in providing training opportunities in benchmarking.
 - d) A brief report will be submitted annually to the EFC Task Force for Global Mission, describing how the Code is being implemented, including submission of current operating benchmarks. The EFC will provide a questionnaire for this purpose.

It is recognized that agencies and churches operate a large variety of short-term programs. The above Code of Best Practice and implementation procedure are designed to be as flexible as possible. Benchmarking provides a means by which this variety can be taken into account as different benchmarks are developed for different contexts.

For more information contact:

Geoff Tunnicliffe, Chair
The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada
Task Force for Global Mission
M.I.P. Box 3745
Markham, ON L3R 0Y4

Email: EFCGlobalMission@home.com

Chapter 6

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Internet Resources

Evangelical Fellowship of Canada Task Force for Global Mission: www.globalmission.org

Brigada: www.brigada.org

Caleb Project: www.calebproject.org

Christian Information Network: www.christian-info.com

DAWN: www.jesus.org.uk/dawn/

Evangelism and Missions Information Service of the Billy Graham Center
www.wheaton.edu/bgc/emis/

Global Evangelization Movement: www.gem-werc.org

Global Mapping: www.gmi.org

Global Connections: www.globalconnections.co.uk

Global Events Calendar: www.globalmission.org/calendar.htm

Global Opportunities Database: www.globalmission.org/go.htm

Mission Network News: www.gospelcom.net

Urbana: www.urbana.org

U.S. Center for World Mission: www.uscwm.org

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Chapter 7
APPENDIX

<p style="text-align: center;">1 Sender Preparation</p> <p>Give all supporters an itinerary so they can pray, give specific times, change clocks in church to mission field time, arrange a send off at the airport.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">2 Sender On Field</p> <p>E-mail updates and scanned photos; arrange phone call during Sunday service.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">3 Sender Follow-up</p> <p>Invite senders to a reporting time; bring small gifts; send articles back to home church ahead of time so they can understand what re-entry is like.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">4 Sent Preparation</p> <p>Commissioning service, prayer meeting, team training for needed skills.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">5 Sent On Field</p> <p>Daily debrief, prayer time, prayer walks.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">6 Sent Follow-up</p> <p>Re-entry meetings to debrief, team party. Seek ways to plug sent into church ministry.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">7 Recipient Preparation</p> <p>Send pictures of all team members plus bio info; ask what resources team can bring for missionaries or local church.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">8 Recipient On Field</p> <p>Listen to host for ideas, opinions, evaluations; give a gift to the host.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">9 Recipient Follow-up</p> <p>Send letters; send a financial gift for the ministry; take pictures and send a photo album of the trip; invite host for a visit to your church.</p>

The MISTM-Grid, copyright R. Wayne Sneed, Memphis, TN, used by permission

Horizontal movement is progression of time.
Vertical movement is categories of involved people.



Bulletin

Evangelical Fellowship of Canada

Canadian Global Missions—A Force for the Task

Canadian evangelicals invest annually over 350 million dollars in the cause of Global Mission. Over 3500 Canadians are serving as missionaries. In addition, thousands of Christians enlist in short-term mission projects every year. By any measurement, this is a considerable investment of resources.

However, the winds of change are swirling with great intensity around the Canadian missionary enterprise. The evangelical mission community in Canada finds itself at a crucial crossroads as it anticipates engaging in mission in the new millennium.

In responding to these challenges our task force is building its strategy around six key issues. These include:

1. Re-defining the role of the Canadian mission agency
2. Mobilizing the Local Church for mission
3. Facilitating and shaping partnership within the Global Mission community
4. Developing leaders for mission in the 21st. Century
5. Training the missionary of the future
6. Affirming biblical theology of mission

Rooted in its well-defined objectives and responding to the expressed needs of the Canadian evangelical community, the Task Force for Global Mission is engaging in an increasing number of activities seeking to leverage Canadian

mission resources. Some of these activities include:

CONFERENCING AND ROUND TABLE FORUMS.

These national and regional events, often held in co-operation with other ministries, focus on bringing together the key stakeholders in mission around shared concerns including:

- Developing a “Code of Best Practice for Short Term Missions”
- Unique challenges facing denominational mission leadership
- Tentmaking
- Missionary mobilization
- Training in partnership development skills
- The holistic nature of the gospel
- Funding mission in the 21st. Century
- A pastors conference on Strengthening the global mission emphasis in the local church
- Training local church global mission consultants
- Developing a “Code of Best Practice for Missionary Care

WEBSITE TOOLS

In responding to the skyrocketing use of the World Wide Web the task force continues to add to its well-established web presence with several new tools. You can check it out at www.globalmission.org.

RESEARCH AND PUBLISHING

A study of 5000 Canadian Churches is helping us take a first-ever snapshot of the contemporary state of global mission in Canada. It will give us an opportunity to reflect on a realistic understanding of the health and influences of our mission programs and strategies. This significant project will result in a resource book designed for leaders on “global mission best practices” for local churches.

A NETWORK OF NETWORKS

The task force is seeking to connect and work with a number of other mission-related networks to facilitate greater cooperation. Some of these networks include:

- IFMA
- Lausanne
- AD 2000
- The Gospel and Our Culture Network
- The Canadian Centres for Global Mission
- Evangelical Missiological Society
- World Evangelical Fellowship
- ACMC

GLOBAL CONNECTIONS

We are working in partnership with the World Evangelical Fellowship Missions Commission to facilitate a research, training and publishing project related to the starting and strengthening of national mission movements.



13488 63 Avenue
Surrey, BC, Canada
V3X 1J9

Phone: 604-502-0981
Fax: 604-608-3215
Email: efcglobalmission@home.com
Website: www.globalmission.org



*Equipping and Networking
the Canadian Church for 21st
Century Mission*

Task Force Overview

To respond to the challenges the Canadian church is facing in its global mission strategy, the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada launched a new Task Force for Global Mission in 1997 with the following purpose and objectives.

Purpose

To the glory of God and for the extension of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, we purpose to maximize the effectiveness of the Canadian Evangelical Community in Global Mission.

Objectives

- To stimulate communication on mission related issues within Canada and between Canada and the world.
- To identify strategic issues, facilitate research and discussion, and stimulate appropriate action.
- To build mutual trust and cooperation in the Canadian Evangelical Community to engage in global mission.
- To increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the mobilization and management of Canadian resources for global mission.

Guiding Principles

In fulfilling our objectives we will:

- Affirm the essential role of the local church in global mission.
- Utilize existing initiatives where they are effective.
- Create initiatives as needed.
- Strive for administrative simplicity.

Current Task Force Members

- Charlotte Bates (Prairie Bible College and Graduate School)
- Cal Bombay (Crossroads Communication)
- Malcolm Card (United Baptist Church, New Brunswick)
- Buff Cox (IVCF)
- Charles Cook (Canadian Bible College)
- Grover Crosby (Partners International.)
- Richard Dodding (Missions Fest Vancouver)
- Bill Fietje (O.M.F.)
- Mary-Elsie Fletcher (Free Methodist Church of Canada)
- Tim Foggin (Montreal Mission Awareness Group)
- Randy Friessen (Youth Mission International)
- Marty Frisk (Christar)
- Matthew Gibbins (Urbana)
- Ann Jamieson (A. D.2000)
- Jonathan Lewis (World Evangelical Fellowship)
- Chadwin Mak (Miliken Gospel Church)
- Dave Mannings (Wycliffe Bible Translators)
- Bob Morris (TIM Centre)
- Mark Orr (International Teams)
- Don Posterski (World Vision)
- Reg Reimer (Interdev)
- Alan Roxburgh (Percept Ministries)
- Craig Shugart (Interserve)
- Geoff Tunnicliffe (Evangelical Fellowship of Canada/International Teams)
- Irving Whitt (PAOC)

Evangelical Fellowship of Canada M.I.P Box 3745 Markham, ON, L3R 0Y4 Telephone: (905) 479-5885

Founded in 1964, the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada is a national association of 32 Protestant denominations, churches, church-related organizations and educational institutions. The EFC is interdenominational. There are an estimated 3 million Protestant evangelical Christians in Canada, representing approximately 10% of the Canadian population, of which approximately 1.2 million are members or adherents of EFC member denominations.



EFC

The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada