

**IMPACT OF SHORT-TERM MISSIONS ON OHORI
MISSION FIELD OF THE NIGERIAN BAPTIST
CONVENTION.**

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ABSTRACT

This research work is an attempt to examine the impact that short-term missions has had on the Ogori Mission field of the Nigerian Baptist Convention, and to identify its negative and the positive effect. The study comprises five chapters. Chapter one contains the introduction to the research work, the purpose of the essay, delimitation and methodology of the study, and definition of terms. The second chapter deals with the concept of short term Missions – tracing it back to the bible times, and the dawn of 20th century when it became a conscious effort of missionary enterprise. Types and duration, personnel, activities, advantages and disadvantages and strategies in short-term mission were all examined and discussed.

Chapter three opens by looking at the birth and expansion of the Nigerian Baptist Convention mission enterprise. It then presents the nature of the Ogori Mission field considering the history of the Ogoris, their socio-economic, cultural, and religious life. The birth and growth of the mission work on Ogori land, and the historical development of short-term missions in Nigerian Baptist Convention were as well discussed.

Chapter four discusses the short term missionaries and their impacts on Ogori Mission field. It gives the background of the respondents, highlights the major findings on the field, and as well gives the achievements and shortcomings of the short-termers. While the concluding chapter, Chapter five offers the conclusions drawn from the research work and the recommendation given by the researcher to the NBC mission agency, the local Baptist churches and the short-termers.

CONCLUSION

This study is not an attempt to throw off the concept of career missionary, but has been able to look at the short-term missionaries' role in the mission enterprise. It has suggested the best possible way the short-termers can help in complementing the effort of the career missionaries in advancing the gospel. For "Career Missionaries and short-term workers are mutually strengthening; but without the career missionary as the base the short-term ministries could hardly take place."¹ Hartford also noted that "short-term ministry is not simply an end. It is part of a process that God can use to prepare His people for a lifetime of ministry involvement"²

It was stated that the initial aim of short-term visit in the 1960s and 70s was to make them experience a feeling of missionary life and experience, as a foundation to helping them to decide on becoming a long term missionary.³ But "short-term trips these days appear to be

¹ Winston Crawley, Global Mission: A Story To Tell, (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1985), 153. Citing R Keith Park's Report to the Foreign Mission Board of Southern Baptist Convention in October, 1990.

² Paul F. Hartford, "Not An End in Itself," Mission Frontiers, (22: 1, January 2002), 22

³ Ryan Shaw, "The Student World and Mission: How Are We Doing," Mission Frontiers, (24:5 September-October, 2002),18

for a 'spiritual experience' rather than producing prepared labourers for the harvest"⁴

As an adage says "there are two sides to a coin," it has been observed in the course of this research that the practice of short-term mission in the NBC is far from the ideal. There is a need for us as a body to rise up to meet the ideal.

To have more long term missionaries, we need to be fully committed to short-term program. It has been proved that the fields which have received aggressive short-term programs are those who now receive more career missionaries.⁵

RECOMMENDATIONS

As highlighted in chapter four, we can feel the impacts of the short-term mission trip in the field of study (Ogori) despite the fact that there has not been a well defined, organized, and co-coordinated program in the NBC. This should give us the motivation to have an organized, well defined and co-coordinated short-term missionary ministry in the Nigerian Baptist Convention so as to have a better performance and more rewarding results.

The researcher therefore recommends as follows to the Global Mission Board of the Nigerian Baptist Convention, Local Baptist Churches/the Short-termers.

⁴ Ibid, citing a denominational representative in California.

⁵ Scott Olson and Joy Bray, "Mobilizing Workers for the 21st Century," Mission Frontiers, 22:1, January 2000.

The Global Missions Board

1. The Global Missions Board of the Nigerian Baptist Convention should set a model plan to serve as a guide for short-termers to the mission fields.
2. The Global Missions Board should as well establish a section/division for short-term ministry, in which the Board will co-ordinate and be the major supervisory body of the short-term ministry. Students on holidays, professionals on leave should be mobilized to participate in it.
3. Christian Mission Minded Corpers who are on their one year National Youth Service Corps can be sought to use their one year service as short-term missionaries at the mission fields.
4. Adequate Mobilization into short-term Missions should be embarked upon by the Board
5. Record keeping and evaluation of the short-term missionaries should be adequately done from time to time by the Global Missions Board. Those who go should endeavour to send their reports to the board.

Local Churches/Short-termers

1. **Networking:** Where there are intending short-termers from local Churches and Missionary Organizations they should consult with the GMB, and proposed mission field; and be informed about what activities they should do. They should

- be made to build on what they meet on ground, and not necessarily a new thing if there is no need for it.
2. Training and on field study: All short-termers at all levels should be adequately trained before going. They should be given re-entry briefing as they enter the field and also have on field study as the need arises.
 3. The Missionary organizations in the convention should be re-oriented that their going to the field should be to achieve a purpose and be persuaded by the love of God; and not for organization's award only.
 4. To make the short-term ministry more effective, the common 3 days/weekend visit to the field in our own NBC context should be improved upon to meet the globally acclaimed standard of 2 weeks to 2 years.
 5. The short-term missionaries should be ready to learn at the field, and not to impose their believes and ways of lives on those they are trying to win.

The writer believes that with the above recommendations, some of the weakness and short-comings of short-term missionary ministry will be reduced to the barest minimum, and produce maximum benefits. Particularly, in this contemporary world where there is an increasing decline in the career missionaries, the need to promote and encourage short-term missionaries has become relevant. For, Olson and Bray writes that

“... those who go on short-term missions find themselves transformed by the experiences. They are far more aware of the needs, far more understanding of the difficulties, and far more prepared to give themselves to a lifetime of ministry”⁶

Ralph D. Winter also said that “I would not have become a missionary had I not gone on a three-week short-term, visiting missionaries in Southern Mexico.”⁷

Finally, in our bid to raise more career missionaries, the need to expose all believers to short-term missionary ministry becomes inevitable. The efforts of these short-termers, if properly guided, will be of great value and advantage to the expansion of the mission work, and will help to reduce the shortage of workers at our mission fields.