

# Don't Let Expectations Get You Down

## Realistic Plans For Short-Term Mission

By Robertson McQuilkin

Avoid disappointment and discouragement by taking a good, clear look at what short-term mission isn't. Then praise the Lord for the wonderful things he does accomplish through the short-term experience.

### Short-term Mission Can't

1. IT CAN'T HELP YOU "TRYOUT" BEING A CAREER MISSIONARY. A short-term mission venture isn't a trial run. Something is tried on a short-term trip, but – like a trial marriage – it isn't long-term commitment. Effectiveness in long-term missionary work is integrally tied to the deep level of identification prolonged commitment brings. This includes mastery of the language and a solid understanding and appreciation of the culture. None of this can happen in a short time. A short-term mission trip might be better compared to dating. You have fun together. You get to know one another. You share in wonderful and meaningful ways. But in time, you both move on to other relationships and other situations.

2. IT CAN'T HELP YOU SOLVE "BIG" PROBLEMS. Short-term missionaries rarely solve major problems during their short stay. You aren't going to save the world. You won't see a seismic spiritual impact in the country you visit. The work of evangelizing and church planting is a cooperative effort that takes many lives over a long time.

3. IT CAN'T HELP YOU "BUY OFF" GOD. Short-term mission isn't a way to soothe guilt over the condition of the world and lack of involvement in finding a solution. It's not a way to "put in time." The question of how you respond to the Great Commission is a broader question of your surrender to the Lord and His direction in your life. It can't be brokered by a short-term mission experience.

### Short-term Mission Can

1. IT CAN GIVE YOU A WONDERFUL EDUCATION. If you are well prepared for your trip, have good supervision during your stay, and find ways to debrief after you get home, you'll find you've learned a great deal – about yourself, about another culture, and about God's work in the world.

2. IT CAN INSPIRE YOU. The short-term experience can infect you with the excitement of God's plan for the ages. Not only can it transform your life, it can also bubble over to others as you share with them upon your return.

3. IT CAN LEAD YOU TO A DEEPER COMMITMENT. Whether it's a future career as a long-term missionary or a resolve to support the mission emphasis back home, a short-term missionary experience can point toward a permanent response to the Lord. It can be a stepping stone to a lifetime of investment in bringing the world to Christ.