A Call for Revolution of Global Ministry through the Short-Term Mission Movement: A Book Proposal for Creative Solutions to the Problems Surrounding the STM Phenomenon

Thesis

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Master of Arts in International Community Development to the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences of Northwest University

By

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**Authors Note:

This document was submitted as part of the requirements for the thesis in the Master of Arts in International Community Development at Northwest University. Portions of this paper are from the following courses: Qualitative Research Methods, Leadership, Fieldwork, Social and Environmental Justice, and Spirituality, Culture, and Social Justice.

Dedicated to
Jenai and Kayla – thanks for walking with me through it all

Acknowledgements
Thank you to Cohort 11 for being the support system I never knew I needed | Thank you to Dr. Inslee for asking me to be part of this project | Thank you to the ICD program for providing an education that is equal parts pragmatic and hopeful | Thank you to my family and friends for cheering me on and cheering me up along the way.

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Proposal

*The following includes the requirements for a co-edited anthology book proposal requested by the publisher Intervarsity Press. Portions of this proposal are written by the co-editor.

Cover Letter

To Whom It May Concern:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit the proposed anthology: A Call for Revolution of Global Ministry through the Short-Term Mission Movement (Working Title). We are pleased to provide you with the required elements of the proposal, as well as three additional essays written by contributors. Throughout this anthology we are provide practitioners with the opportunity to share their knowledge and alternative process' of global ministry through short-term trips (STMs).

Currently, the anthology is in process with 21 confirmed contributors. Published contributors include Miriam Adeney, Steve Corbett, Ryan Kuja, Gena Thomas, Jean Johnson and Craig Greenfield. All authors are practitioners in the field, ranging from global ministry leaders, mission-sending agencies, hosts of short-term teams, and community members who have received teams. Each of the contributors exhibit the characteristics of humility, teachability, respectfulness, and collaboration. By sharing their experience and knowledge, our hope is that those of us in the global church will be courageous in our efforts to engage in the revolution regarding global ministry through STMs.

Our intended audience are those dismayed by the downsides of present STM practices and who desire to advocate for change, but may not know what change looks like. We want to encourage discontented missions pastors and youth group leaders who feel compelled to do something in the realm of "formational cross-cultural missions" yet do not want to employ the same tired models that they know do not work. We want to equip Christian college missions and travel service coordinators who wish to meet the educational needs of their students, but are seeking ways that minimize cultural disruption and harm. We want to encourage approaches that foment processes of personal transformation, disabuse students of false narratives of cultural and economic superiority, and thereby equip people for humble, informed, responsible global citizenship. Importantly, we aim to give hope to those on the receiving end of STMs, the representatives of host cultures who long to see a better investment of resources, to see their people be less disrupted and dishonored by current STM praxis, and who dream of a more collaborative, co-creative, coequal relationship to partner churches in the global north.

The current trajectory for this book expects the first complete draft by October, 2020. It is our goal for the book to not exceed 300 pages. If rejected, please feel free to discard the enclosed proposal.

We appreciate your time as you discern if this work is the right fit for Intervarsity Press.

Sincerely,

Chapter by Chapter Summary

Forward by Dr. Miriam Adeney, anthropologist, missiologist, and author.

Chapter 1: The introductory chapter includes the co-editors experience with STMs, the past and present of short-term trips, the expectation of the following chapters, and the intended audience.

Chapter 2: The Values and Statements of Belief chapter provides a concise explanation of the co-editors understanding of the STM phenomenon. It is written to provide clarity for the audience as they continue reading the book.

Chapter 3: This chapter includes essays that contribute to the conceptual and theological understanding of global ministry through STMs. Authors write out topics such as STMs and social justice, STMs in an era of globalization, STMs and the global church, genuine relationship and partnership in STMs, mutuality in STMs, and more.

- **Craig Greenfield:** "A modest proposal for a new way of doing Short-Term Missions" is a combination of Craig's most popular blog posts. Craig challenges readers to think beyond the traditional STM approach by challenging the language surrounding STMs, the temptation to misuse financial resources, and the long-term view of partnering with ministries beyond the two-week STM.
- **Steve Corbett and Megan Pratt:** Primarily based on his co-authored book *When Helping Hurts in Short-Term Missions,* Corbett and Pratt examine definitions, assumptions, and approaches typically employed in STM that could cause harm to both travelers and more importantly, to those we mean to "serve." They recommend "re-branding" short-term missions to become a long-term commitment to learning and

sharing about people/culture and already-existing poverty alleviation work that we can support as a result of our learning journey; reframing our role as "goers and doers" to "learners, givers, and advocates."

- **Gena Thomas:** Thomas, a former missionary to Mexico and current author of *A Smoldering Wick* and *Separated by the Border*, writes on a theology of justice-minded missions work as opposed to the dominant charity-minded framework. Additionally, the essay offers two tools for more participatory short-term mission trips: a Typology of Participation and a Partnership Analysis.
- **Jean Johnson:** As the current director of Five Stones Global, Johnson and author of *We Are Not The Hero,* Johnson provides insight into why why STM trips are harmful for the recipients, why it might not be as beneficial as we think for the senders and short-termers, and healthy alternatives based on her 35 years of mission experience.
- **Cyrus Mad-Bondo:** Pastor Cyrus Mad-Bondo of McClean Bible Church shares his unique perspective of coming to know Christ through missionaries in Africa to now mobilizing Western Christian's to form cross-cultural relationships around the world. He writes on the topic of the global church and how travel can be part of creating greater unity within the Body of Christ.
- **Ryan Kuja**: The purpose of Kuja's essay is to invite reflection on the guiding narratives that support STM methodologies which often unintentionally perpetuate dependence, the shame/poverty cycle, messiah complexes, and other harm. Addressing methods while largely neglecting the deeper narrative realm has yielded thin modifications rather than the deep, innovative change that is possible in terms of how we think about and engage in short-term trips. This chapter is not only a corrective for disempowering narratives but

also an invitation to reimagine how we can embody the gospel across cultures in more beautiful ways.

- **Sylvia Ramquist:** In this essay, Ramquist explains how she was able to move her congregation away from traditional STMs and into a combination of global and local ministry. She then expands on their decision to focus their global ministry strategy on what she calls "target audiences" rather than specific countries or people groups. Her wisdom and experience provides hope for ministry leaders in the West that are reimagining what global ministry looks like in their context.

Chapter 4: This chapter is comprised of contributions from people who have hosted STMs. The goal of this section is to provide a platform for the receivers of STMs to voice their understanding of what new praxis in STMs could look like within their context. The host perspective is invaluable, although rarely heard in the STM conversation. Contributors to this section have hosted STMs in both developed and poverty-stricken areas, allowing the reader to experience STMs through the lens of a variety of viewpoints.

- **Austin Robinson:** In his essay, Austin aims to re-symbolize the white passenger van often associated with STMs in his ministry in Mexico. Austin allows a critique of current STM practices to encourage creative thinking about how STMs can be done differently in contexts similar to his own.
- **Hannah Sharick:** Hannah provides a perspective on hosting STMs in Tokyo, Japan. She draws on her six years living in Japan to provide readers with an understanding of what STMs look like in a developed nation. Additionally, she sheds light on STMs being either a burden or a blessing on long-term missionaries.

- **Jesse Martin:** As the COO of Advancing Native Missions, Martin provides an understanding of how STMs can be helpful instead of harmful in his specific context.
- **Rebekah Rodda:** Rebekah has a myriad of experiences to share regarding hosting STMs. Her essay is specific to how STMs can be beneficial when trip participants are unfamiliar with the local language.
- **Jason Lyle and Hillary Wafulla:** Lyle and Wafulla partner together to bring teams to Uganda. They co-write this essay to express a new way of preparing teams with new expectations that provide healthier partnerships.
- **Korryzon Akikalamu and Katie Cannon:** Based in Indonesia, Akikalamu and Cannon co-write an essay explaining how they have crafted STMs to be of use by implementing evaluation, concept of copowerment, learning, and wellbeing.

Chapter 5: This chapter includes essays that provide practical examples of global ministry being done in unique ways. Hosts and senders outline the creative ways that they have altered typical STM practices to fit their context and form unity throughout the global church. The purpose of this section is not for the reader to duplicate one of the types of trips, but rather to encourage participants of STMs in creative contextualization that produces new outcomes and forms stronger bonds throughout the Global Body.

- **Lenore Three Star, Corey Greaves, and Doug Volle:** Through interviewing Three Star and Greaves, Volle explains how SLAM trips implemented change from the traditional short-term missions model by shifting the perspective of the students from teaching to learning. These trips seek to remove the power imbalance between those sent on the trip and those that host and generate an environment of co-laboring, where cultural exchange

can occur. This essay demonstrates how this is practically accomplished in SLAM trips, and also explore how the Indigenous view of missions challenge the traditional Western view of missions and the Gospel.

- **Nathan Nelson:** Nathan uses his extensive experience working with Bethany Christian Church and World Relief Rwanda to outline Reverse Trips. After years of trust building and partnership forging, Bethany is cultivating space for true mutuality by inviting the Rwandan partners to bless the congregation in America.
- **Matt and Elena Toombs:** The Toombs explains how the Adopt-a-Village program works in the country of Senegal. The emphasis is on mutual relationship building, transformation, and longevity in partnerships.
- **Robert Katende (Lisa San Martin):** Through Robert's experience running a ministry in Uganda, Robert and Lisa express the importance of viewing STMs as a learning experiences for the participants. No longer seen as only the beneficiaries, the Ugandans become the educators that provide their knowledge to those visiting.
- **Susie Walters:** With over 10 years of experience in Mexico, Walter's challenges visitors to evaluate the long-term implications of their time abroad on local residents and to recognize how they fit into God’s ongoing narrative in the community where they serve.
- **Sylvia Ramquist:** Once again, Sylvia expounds upon a new type of trip that is focused on exposing "nones and dones" (young people who identify as having no religious affiliation) to poverty as they work through the difficult questions raised when faced with extreme poverty.
- **Carrie Jorgenson:** Carrie explains how "Paradigm Trips" cultivate true encouragement throughout the global church.

- **Hannah Bryant:** As the Executive Director of Leadership Mission International, Hannah Bryant co-writes this chapter with a Honduran national on the unique trips being received in Honduras.

Review of Competing Books

Schuetze, DJ and Steiner, Phil, *Reciprocal Missions: Short-Term Missions that Serve Everyone,* P & D Publishing, April 2018, ISBN-10:0692090525, 221 pgs, $12.99, ranked #317,946 in Books and #456 in Christian Missions & Missionary Work.

In this work, the authors speak specifically to how short-term trips can be used as mutual, reciprocal blessings between the senders and the receivers. The authors of *Reciprocal Missions* provide a much-needed emphasis on mutuality and reciprocation in STMs, eliminating the beneficiary/savior ideas and understanding that we experience both giving and receiving when we participate in STMs. While the main theme and philosophy of *Reciprocal Missions* is echoed in the proposed anthology, we are able to emphasize the importance of creativity and contextualization when forming cross-cultural partnerships, which allows for more individuality in the way STMs are accomplished. Additionally, because our book is an anthology, we are providing multiple perspectives that are coming together to voice their experiences and opinions.

Kuja, Ryan, *From the Inside Out: Reimagining Mission, Recreating the World,* Cascade Books, May 2018, ISBN-10 1532616392, 208 pg, $26.00, ranked #1,358,975 in Books.

As one of the more recent works in the field, Kuja looks at the history of missions and asks difficult questions which force us to come face to face with the harm caused by current mission methods. Our philosophies intersect to the point that Kuja has agreed to be a contributor for the proposed anthology. Again, our book will cover a broader scope of topics and be more practitioner-focused.

Two Complete Sample Chapters

Chapter 1: Introduction

Growing up in a Christian home, Rebekah had gone on various short-term mission trips (STMs) throughout her life. As we swapped stories over a meal, she shared one experience that has remained with me. Years earlier, Rebekah traveled on a mission trip with her Church in America to Mexico to build a school. While her father, a medical doctor, completed much needed medical training for community members, the rest of the untrained high school group spent their week stacking bricks, with the result being one shoddy wall. Later in the week, as the team looked back with pride through the rear-view window, Rebekah watched the wall they had constructed crumble and fall.

We seek to provide a strong and stable platform for practitioners who have envisioned an alternative process for cross-cultural relationships formed through the means of short-term trips. To accomplish this, we have compiled this anthology that focuses on providing authors the opportunity to share their creative solutions to the problems surrounding traditional STMs. Topics related to short-term trips will be expressed by a collection of authors who exhibit the characteristics of humility, teachability, respectfulness, and collaboration. They are practitioners in the field, ranging from global ministry leaders, mission sending agencies, hosts of short-term teams, and community members who have received teams. By sharing their experiences, our hope is to encourage those of in the global church to be courageous in our efforts to reimagine how we can form partnerships throughout the Global body of believers.

This book was not created to critique short-term mission trips. Those books have already been written. However, we (the co-editors and contributors) refuse to turn a blind eye to the harm that STMs have been part of caused. For those who have never heard of or thought about the

painful aspects of STMs, there will be a list of resources available in the appendix. For those who have had several encouraging experiences with STMs and believe that all STMs produce positive outcomes, please walk into this topic with an open heart and humility to accept the truth of the impact from the STM phenomenon (both the positives *and* negatives). That is the journey that I have been on. Lastly, if you are someone that has seen the walls crumble, the money wasted, faith shattered, and relationships manipulated, read on with humility and an openness to reimagine what has been so harshly criticized.

The essayists in this book have made every effort to speak *honestly.* There truly is space for reinventing STMs when we place our intentions before God and ask for creativity and critical thinking in our hearts and minds as we join in the mission around the world. As part of the global church, what we build will be stronger if we do it together. There is no reason to continue watching poorly constructed walls fall when we can create and build something sustainable and beautiful if we construct it out of mutual respect, love, and trust.

Angel's Story

I sat in Little Saigon in Seattle, Washington, drinking boba tea, while talking to a new friend about our travels and church experiences. These two topics often merge in the area of short-term mission trips. I quickly climbed up on my soapbox as my friend asked my opinion on STMs. After awhile, she looked at me and said, “Angel, why don’t you study STMs? Why not use what you’ve learned for your thesis?” I paused for a second and then replied with an emphatic “No!” That conversation was almost 2 years ago. And now, here I am, writing the introduction for a book on global ministry through STMs and working with almost two dozen contributors who are passionate about reimagining how STMs can be done for the glory of God

and the strengthening of the global church. My "No" stemmed from years of feeling confused and discouraged about STMs. I had led and participated in a dozen trips. On one trip I would be backpacking in the Amazon jungle, and the next I would be getting off a train in Tokyo, Japan. It was a whirlwind. But, no matter where I went or who I took with me, I would sit on the plane home and think, "What were we doing? What was the purpose? Did the good negate the bad? Can this be done better? Should it be done at all?".

My friend was one of many who continued to encourage me to pursue researching and writing about STMs through qualitative research in my graduate program. For me, however, this topic is not limited to STMs. It is a conversation about the global church. If there is one thing that I have learned from my travels, it is that God has created us to further His Kingdom *together*. We aren't supposed to do it alone. There is so much that we can learn from one another. In our globalized world, creative STMs can be used to form connections in which we share encouragement, mutuality, and fellowship. The Church in Vietnam taught me how to sing praise to the Lord in the midst of persecution. The Church in Japan taught me how to stand firm against cultural apathy. The Church in Bolivia taught me what faith looks like in the midst of suffering. These are lessons that I would not have learned if I had not worshipped with my brothers and sisters overseas. How limited my view of God would have been if I had missed the blessing of learning from them.

STMs have been part of my life since I was a teenager. I went on my first STM when I was in middle school and participated in many traditional trips where I witnessed the "good, the bad, and the ugly" of STMs. After living in Japan as a short-term missionary for several months, I became an STM leader through a small organization in my hometown. Throughout that experience, I was able to participate in a different side of the STM phenomenon. As a trip leader,

my main priority was my team. I was dedicated to the quality of their experience and safety. Alternatively, when I lived overseas and experienced hosting a team, my main concern was the community where I lived and the ministry that I had joined. After leading and participating in several more trips, and living overseas again short-term, I took a break from trips and decided to reevaluate if the current STM model was worth the time, energy, cost, and potential harm it caused.

Once I began my position as an Outreach coordinator in my current church in Washington, I started to wonder if there were alternative methods for partnering with the global church. What does partnership truly look like? What does mutual trust look like when living thousands of miles apart as part of different cultures? Do STMs always cause harm, not only to those who are receiving them but also to those who are going? Are we providing those in the American Church with false ideas of the global church?

In response to my personal questions, I embarked on qualitative research conducted through interviews with global ministry leaders in the U.S, sending mission organizations, and hosts of STMs. I was eager to hear from others in similar positions about the topic of STMs. Was everyone facing the same problems? More importantly, was anyone working towards solutions? I was able to hear from practitioners who have experienced far more than I have. Through interviews with them, I began to realize the need for radically different ideas regarding global ministry and partnerships between the American Church and the rest of the global church. The need for creative ideas spurred the motivation for collecting the voices of those who are solution-focused and experiencing new ideas with regards to STMs.

My story is woven through this chapter. However, what I am hoping is that all of our stories will be reflected in the essays that follow. My prayer is that by sharing the voices of

Christian's all over the world who are invested in global ministry through STMs, we will come together in obedience to the Holy Spirit and begin to imagine what a reformation of STMs might look like. In these essays, humble obedience meets creative expectation as we eagerly stand ready to be part of the work that God is doing through the global church – through us.

Forrest's Story

It was actually in the context of a short-term mission trip that I found my way forward to a longer commitment. In college I had determined that I wanted to be a full-time missionary, but I did not know exactly where I would go. I traveled to Europe, and then to Central America, looking for my place. I took a job in Chicago, working with the homeless, and eventually went back to school to pursue a PhD. (I had learned that college teaching was a great way to establish connections even in relatively closed countries, so a PhD seemed like a wise thing to pursue!) During this time, my church in Chicago was invited by a group of young Turkish converts to do some short-term teaching in Istanbul about how to start a church. I ended up joining that team, not because I ever imagined serving long-term in Turkey, but mostly for the sake of a new adventure! However, in the end there turned out to be some deep resonance in me for that context and for the Turkish believers we worked with. By the end of the trip our new Turkish friends there asked me to return and stay, to help them in the work of creating a church.

Importantly, when I eventually returned to Turkey, I was not burdened with an American agenda; rather, I was sent with the understanding that I would serve under *Turkish* leadership, and what work I did there would be determined by them. As a teacher, I expected that my job would be teaching—and it was. But in addition, I was charged with starting a new social purpose business, mentoring young leaders, and leading worship for the church—in Turkish—before I

had actually learned Turkish. Serving the priorities of the Turkish church, rather than an agenda imported from abroad, profoundly shaped my understanding of mission work in those years. As a headstrong American, I made lots of mistakes, and occasionally got into trouble for getting too pushy—yet I had plenty of opportunities to learn cultural humility, and a corresponding respect for the capabilities of my host community and culture.

So when our church in Istanbul was asked to help host short-term missions teams a couple of years later, I had become aligned with and oriented to my adopted community to the point that I could see our American visitors with something of a Turkish point of view. While the short-termers were excited and sincere in their willingness to be useful, I was sometimes hard pressed to find things for them to do (and yes, supervising short-termers was yet another job my Turkish supervisors assigned to me). While the young Americans seemed all too willing to spend days mucking out an abandoned building that we intended to use for serving street kids, it was clear that those same street kids *could* have been *employed* for a tiny fraction of the money the Americans were spending on flights and hotels for a week.

While most of the STM teams were well-behaved and coachable when it came to cultural appropriateness, there were times when I was embarrassed with and for my fellow Americans. One guy, for example, was adamant in his belief that he was called to preach the gospel in the streets, and that many Turks would no doubt hear the gospel, repent, and be saved. I tried to explain to him that Christian witness was done a little differently in a Muslim context. He went and did it anyway, and was promptly beaten up by an angry crowd. In the end, not only did he end up costing his Turkish hosts a lot of time and trouble when they had to care for him . . . he also put local Christians at risk by attracting the attention of the police. Still, he seemed satisfied

in the end, and he soon went back to the States with a great story to tell about "suffering for the gospel." (Oh boy.)

It was experiences like these that convinced me that short-term missions trips really didn't (and don't) make sense. True, a short-term experience had changed *my* life profoundly. Yet even that trip was unusual according to American church norms: my church had been *asked* by the Turks to send a teaching team, and even told what to teach about! And because there were few Turkish believers in the country at that time, and because they were just trying to figure out how to *do* church, we foreigners really were doing a job that others in that context could not. However, I still have to say that my subsequent experiences with teams of well-meaning foreigners convinced me that STMs represent a bad use of resources, are generally not all that helpful, and sometimes create a lot of disruption and heartache.

My (admittedly ungenerous) attitude would lead me in time to develop a very different philosophy when it came to missions—and to international community development in general. During my remaining years in Turkey though, our community eventually learned to turn away offers of short-term team visits; instead they began to think strategically about collaborating with their brothers and sisters in North America, Europe and Asia. We began to define specific projects that would actually *benefit* from specialized skills, knowledge, and material resources that were not easy for the community of Turkish believers to come by. As we made plans to open a small theater, art studio, and café to serve the local community, for example, we created project descriptions, budgets, job descriptions and materials lists. This allowed the church to be very clear with foreign sending churches about the shape, size, and purpose of the sort of short-term teams that *were actually needed*. In the end, these teams were much smaller (and as a result, better resourced due to the costs savings). Yet the most important difference was that, instead of

youth groups and mission committees, the teams included skilled baristas to train the café staff, and professional mural artists to transform the walls of the theater. We even had a team of amateur interior decorators who came to renovate a new study center. Not only did they bring their skills for creating a welcoming and functional space—they also came with money from the missions budget to purchase local furniture, paint, and curtain fabric—and even a couple of handyman husbands to help with the labor.

To make a long story short, I eventually moved back to the States to start a master's program in international community development. Through that program I try to teach (among other things) better ways to love and serve interculturally. I still hold to the belief that, in the way that most churches in the Global North do STM, these trips do more harm than good, result in a misuse of resources, and encourage bad theology (and equally bad practice). Still, the lessons I learned from my years in the Turkish church continue to give me hope that, with some courage and imagination, we might still rethink and replace the dominant STM models with something much more mutually respectful, effective, and collaborative.

Past and Present of the STM Movement

The Global Church

I (Angel) have found myself attempting to walk the line between the two prevalent reactions to the short-term missions movement. There are those that are adamant that STMs have caused irreparable harm, and there are those who have seen the positives of the trips and will not be dissuaded from continuing to lead and orchestrate them. Because of these extreme perspectives, I have found that using the language of "global church" is accurate and helpful when explaining what this book is about. The global church is comprised of every person that

belongs to the Christian faith, in every part of the world. It is the broadest term that I can think of; encompassing all denominations, ethnicities, languages, and cultures. When God looks at His Church, He sees all of us – those in the African Bush and those in the American pew. If God views all of us as his united bride, then shouldn't we act out our faith as part of a unified body of believers?

As we begin to question our perceived role as part of the global Church, it is important to realize that short-term trips have transformed the concept of "missions". Whereas people used to imagine long-term missionaries packing their belongings in their coffins, they now imagine groups of 20 Americans in bright T-shirts, boarding a plane to Mexico. Globalization has been a large part of the STM shift, with technology allowing us to both connect and travel to areas that used to be unreachable. We now have universities sending college students to Botswana and youth groups landing in Honduras. Short-term trips have become the way in which we, the Church, engage with the rest of the world.

I do believe that STMs can be used as part of global ministry among the global church. In fact, I think it is necessary. But what we must realize is that STMs are not the conclusion of global ministry. They are part of a much larger story; the story of our unified faith played out in our globalized world. When we speak about short-term trips within global ministry, we must realize that we are simply acting as one part of a larger whole. We in the Western Church must refuse to isolate ourselves by limiting our involvement with the rest of the Church. We must open our eyes and dive into relationships that push our understanding of who God is and what faith looks like. I believe that this is the heart of God in this specific time in history – that we build one another up across cultures and continents, joining together in unity as the global church.

The History of Short-Term Mission Trips

When the STM boom happened in the early 2000s, no one – not missiologists, pastors, missionaries, hosts – were prepared for the continued impact that these trips would have on global ministry. Nearly 20 years later, there is still confusion on the very definition of short-term mission trips. There is no consensus on the length of trips, the biblical framework for trips, or the overall purpose of trips. And yet, in 2006 it was recorded that there are over 2 million STMs sent out of the American church each year (Corbett and Fikkert 17).

While the problems associated with short-term trips can be overwhelming, in more recent years there has been progress regarding defining the fundamentals of STMs. When books like *Toxic Charity* and *When Helping Hurts* made their entrance into mainstream Christianity, many church leaders and laypeople paused long enough to take a clear look at their involvement with STMs. Authors, Lupton, Fikkert, and Corbett, drew from the work of Robert J. Priest and other missiologist that were dedicated to uncovering the details of the short-term mission tidal wave that had washed over the American church.

Priest articulated both the necessity and propriety of researching the short-term missions movement. He states that “while it has never been difficult to find critics of short-term missions, or strong advocates, and while there is a burgeoning new body of books advocating and instructing on short-term missions, prior to 2003 very little actual research had been done on short-term missions and its role in the contemporary global mission scene" (Effective Engagement in Short-term Missions: Doing It Right!, v). In 2006, Priest brought forth the much-needed data which showed the rising level of participation in STMs (see fig. 1). However, the research has not kept up with the movement and we still find ourselves steeped in overwhelming

inadequacy when it comes to the implementation of productive STMs and the discerning of the limited data available.

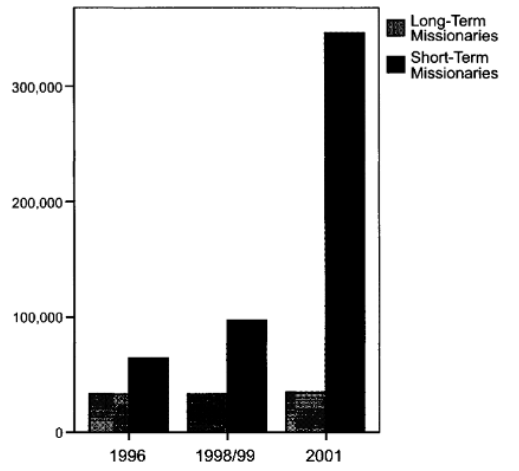

Figure 1: Data on U.S. Personnel for 690 Protestant Mission Agencies

Source: Priest, Robert J., et al. “Researching the Short-Term Mission Movement.” Missiology: An International Review, vol. 34, no. 4, 2006, pp. 431–450.

The confusion surrounding STMs is so great that there still is no concise definition of the term. Brian Howell, author of *A Short-Term Mission: An Ethnography of Christian Travel Narrative and Experience,* said "Given the modifier short-term, it might seem that the duration of a mission defines a short-term mission from some other sort. However, not only is the question of what constitutes "short" a debated point, but the definition of mission-and its differentiation from missions-is often contested as well" (45). Eventually, he provides a description of short-term trips from missiologists Enoch Wan and Geoffery Hartt: "intentionally limited, organized, cross-cultural mission efforts for a pre-determined length of time without participants making a residency-based commitment of more than two years"(47). Of course, others in the field say that there is no way to decipher a timeline for this type of missionary activity which means that there can be no clear definition agreed upon (Priest 281). With over

777 million configurations of what we call "short-term missions", it has simply become too big and complex a phenomenon to adequately define (Howell 68). Obviously, while great effort has been made to tame the STM movement, there remains lingering confusion about the purpose, size, and impact of these trips.

For too long there has been only one model for STMs. There are a plethora of "how-to" books written for trip leaders that, while well-intended, reinforce the idea that six meetings, VBS supplies, neon-colored T-shirts, and a quick Google search about the culture you're dropping your team into will suffice. Efforts have been made to emphasize longevity and partnerships with hosts of STMs, but there is little information about how to create real, healthy partnerships. Perhaps this is because the answer will differ depending on the context. Contextualization allows for the model to widen and become a philosophy instead of a manual. It demands hosts and participants to be engaged in critical thinking about what type of partnership best fits their home culture. In the end, it creates healthy, trust-filled partnerships among the global church through the means of short-term trips.

What to Expect in this Book

In our aims to present alternative approaches to predominant American short-term mission practices, we have brought together the perspectives of people who are already challenging the status quo. While their innovations and experiments are diverse, these practitioners all tend to share some characteristics in common. They are:

Humble

Teachable

Respectful

Collaborative

They are *humble* in that their essential stance toward STM assumes that they *simply don't know*. They have embraced the reality that old ways of doing short-term trips and projects don't work anymore. In fact, some would ask whether past approaches ever really worked well to achieve the church's objectives, and others question the very objectives themselves. This means that there is a willingness on the part of our community of activist thinkers to admit past failures—individual and collective, to repent of mistakes that have caused harm, and to freely confess their uncertainty and confusion about where we go from here. For those who want to reinvent STM, there are no sacred cows, and no traditions that cannot be questioned. The position of this text assumes that if we are ever to sort out the future of STM work, we must begin from this place of letting go of what we think we know. This leaves us in an uncomfortable place, really, of dis-orientation and unknowing—but a necessary one.

As it will become clear, the deep humility of our writers invariably makes them *teachable*: They seek to learn new ways of understanding that will inspire new ways of being and doing. In some ways, "teachable" is almost too passive a word to describe this quality; "curious" might be a better word, because it suggests that those who are committed to rethinking STM are driven to seek new knowledge in order to reimagine. This sort of essential teachability requires courage, because what we receive when we open ourselves to the as-yet-unknown can make us feel insecure. And any of us with leadership responsibilities understand what courage it takes to introduce a new idea when it is likely to be perceived as a threat to tradition, stability, and even community identity. Yet teachable leaders help their people to be teachable as well—a crucial attitude in the realm of missions, but even more so for every aspect of faith-life.

Importantly, the "teachers" from whom our authors seek new perspective tend to be those on the receiving end of the church's well-meaning missional efforts. Too often the voices from

these “host cultures” tend to be ignored by the sending church; and when their perspectives are sought out, there are in fact limits to how honest they can be due to dynamics of power, money, and culture. Yet as the essays in this book will show, to be authentically *respectful* assumes that our hosts have contextual knowledge that is essential in our efforts to serve effectively and avoid doing damage. Perhaps more importantly, cultivating respect begins with the understanding that “service” as a one-way, top-down dynamic can be fundamentally dishonoring to the “served”. Those who are truly respectful thus assume the possibility of mutual service, and (joyfully, eagerly, humbly) anticipate the gifts and blessings our hosts have to offer in return.

Respect then becomes a foundation for working together in trusting interdependence. As so many of our writer’s prove, to be authentically *collaborative* means that each side of the STM social equation will trust themselves wholeheartedly to the unique understanding, capacities, and resources of the other. In so doing, those from the “sending” churches will actively set aside (and repent of) their assumptions of cultural superiority, and the sense of power that comes with representing greater material resources. Only then can true collaborative conversation happen.

And when it does, as various of our authors prove, such authentic sharing invariably leads to innovative, sometimes radically reimagined expressions of the call to mission. In many cases, collaborative conversation of this sort challenges the very definition of that call, and raise profound questions about old paradigms: What really is the “mission field”? And if there are churches already present in those contexts, what then does “mission field” mean for them? What does God *really* ask of us when it comes to communicating the truth of the gospel, and how might we have unthinkingly adopted a skewed and narrow definition of missional work? How does a church’s prioritization on short term missions balance against the myriad biblical

admonitions to serve the poor? And what are the implications of God's heart for the poor and oppressed for the ways such churches spend their resources on so-called "missions" endeavors?

These are just a few of the very important questions the church needs to be asking more than it does. This collection of essays seeks to ask such questions boldly, and then (more humbly) to pose some possible answers—and to encourage a broader conversation thereby.

Intended Audience

We want to inspire people—especially among younger generations—who are dismayed by the downsides of present STM practices, who want to advocate for change, but may not know what change looks like. We want to encourage discontented missions pastors and youth group leaders who feel compelled to do something in the realm of "formational cross-cultural missions" yet don't want to employ the same tired models that they know do not work. We want to equip Christian college missions and travel service coordinators who want to meet the educational needs of their students, but are seeking ways that minimize cultural disruption and harm. We want to encourage approaches that foment processes of personal transformation, disabuse students of false narratives of cultural and economic superiority, and thereby equip young people for humble, informed, responsible global citizenship. Also, importantly, we aim to give hope to those on the receiving end of STM, the representatives of host cultures who long to see a better investment of resources, to see their people be less disrupted and dishonored by current STM praxis, and who dream of a more collaborative, co-creative, coequal relationship to partner churches in the global north.

Chapter 2: Values/Themes

Angel's Core Values:

These core values represent beliefs that I have formed regarding STMs, global ministry, and global church partnerships.

Biblical Foundation:

1. We are one Body of Believers; a Unified Church through Christ. *"12 For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. 13 For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12:12-13).*

2. Christians belong not only to our culture or country, but first and foremost to one another through our identity as children of God. *"So in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others" (Rom. 12:5).*

3. Humility must first be part of our relationship with the Lord, then in our relationship with one another. *"10 Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you" (James 4:10).*

4. There is a responsibility to acknowledge the needs of this world with deed and truth. *"16 By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. 17 But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? 18 Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth" (1 John 3:16-18).*

5. People are created in the image of God, and therefore, should be treated with dignity, respect, and care. "*Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness…" (Genesis 1:26).*

Beliefs about Current STM practices:

6. STMs, in their current model, encourage participants to view "the other" through a lens of pity and superiority instead of a Christ-like understanding of love and beauty.

7. The assumption that STM leads to LTM is mistaken. We can imagine a new way to encourage and inspire the next generation of LTM.

8. STMs foster an unhealthy understanding of poverty, development, and generosity in those who participate in them.

9. The "pornography of poverty" is used in STM for a variety of reasons, and should be understood and guarded against. ("Poverty porn" is when those in media or development use the stories or photographs of those living in poverty to elicit emotional reactions from the viewers. One of the problems with the pornography of poverty is that it takes the complexity of humanity and poverty and misleads people into believing that it is an easy fix (ex. Donate $10 to save a child in Somalia).

10. We must stop using the term short-term missions if we want to provide clarity regarding the purpose and effects of how short-term trips are currently being implemented.

Core beliefs about needed changes for STMs:

11. LTM will look differently now because of the great answers to prayers that we are experiencing throughout the world. STM should also be reimaged in light of the progress that has been made in expanding the Gospel throughout the world.

12. Globalization should change the way that the church interacts cross-culturally.

13. An increase in global connection through globalization should bring forth a new wave of unity in the Body of Christ. Support should look differently considering we now have the opportunity to communicate, travel, and encourage one another with ease.

14. The American church has **so much to learn** from the global church. We must humble ourselves and eagerly accept teaching and rebuke from our global church family.

15. The American church has **so much to give** the global church. The resources available to us must be stewarded in wise and generous ways. Anything less than Christ-like generosity is sinful.

16. The work of "mission" is for the church. Cross-cultural travel can be a learning experience for anyone, but is in a different realm than what we consider "mission".

17. Hosts of STMs should be inviting members of the global church into partnerships that are based on mutual trust, longevity, and common missiological beliefs.

18. Hosts should not accept STMs on the sole basis of financial gain.

19. Senders should approach STMs as part of a larger ministry that God is calling them into.

20. Senders should be strategic in whom they partner with. Prayer, communication, discernment, and patience should be central while the hosts and senders determine if a partnership is wise.

21. Cultural differences on *both sides of the partnership* should be considered and communicated.

22. Those who go on STMs must be more than just *willing*. They must have demonstrated a longing to connect with the global church, humility and eagerness to learn, and the dedication to process through the difficult formation that comes from short, intense travel to unfamiliar places.

23. Cross-cultural travel through the church can provide insight for American believers regarding religious persecution and the vast cultural uniqueness that God created. It can remind those that are struggling that they are not alone and it can bring us together in prayer and relationship.

24. Cross-cultural travel through the church can enhance connection among the global church, encourage generosity, and expand people's perspective of what God is doing around the world. It has acted as a catalyst in equipping people to engage locally and globally with those in vulnerable situations.

25. Churches and individuals must be discerning how to serve their local community as well as the global community.

26. Invitations should be offered for reciprocal relationships when beginning a cross-cultural relationship. There is more than one beneficiary when it comes to the global church interacting with one another. We should approach one another through humility, at the foot of the cross, eager to learn more about our Father from one another.

Forrest's Core Principles:

Power and history—We start with the premise that there are times when both sending and host cultures will be complicit in playing out persistent dynamics of colonialism, political disparity,

and economic inequality. We must ask: How do we actively and courageously confront, critique and deconstruct those global-historical forces? Those who receive STM teams would do well to acknowledge the extent to which they play the roles prescribed for them, and seek to break free from those confines of thought and action in order to relate on a co-equal basis to foreign visitors.

Humility and Repentance— All churches engaged in short-term missions need to face squarely and honestly the past mistakes committed in the cause of "mission"; even when there is no direct connection or personal responsibility, Christians can still repent for the "sins of their fathers", whether committed in the distant past or in more recent history. Host cultures must be given the opportunity to offer forgiveness, but might also be drawn by the Spirit to repentance for their own corresponding failings, such as entrenched resentment, or the embrace and exploitation of unhealthy dependencies.

Curiosity and Teachability—Nothing can change in the STM dynamic unless all stakeholders—especially those from sending contexts—choose to acknowledge what they do not know, and embrace the stance of learners. We must then ask: What is required to truly, deeply listen? And how do appreciate local wisdom, and honor the perspectives of our hosts? Host cultures too must choose to be boldly curious about the true needs of short-term senders.

Collaboration and Partnership—Sending organizations need to make the perspective shift from seeing their hosts as passive receivers and beneficiaries in a one-way giving relationship. Instead, a new, more authentic relationship between churches would begin with the question: What is the mission of God in a particular place and time, and how can churches from disparate yet complementary contexts come together to achieve that mission together? The Latin phrase

Nihil de Nobis, Sine Nobis—"Nothing about us without us"—describes the necessary stance of those in the host context that is prerequisite to coequal partnership. Only from a stance of mutual respect can the church work together to re-imagine STM and innovate new responses to God's invitation to witness and proclamation.

Copowerment and Mutual Transformation—When both senders and receivers in the STM dynamic are able to acknowledge exploitative agendas and overcome unhealthy relational dynamics, they free themselves to encounter one and other as brothers and sisters in Christ. When they are able to *acknowledge their need of one and other,* copowerment becomes possible. As such, they may then offer their resources, their knowledge, and their very selves for the benefit of one and other's transformation. The new "agenda" is redefined to include the growth, health, and shalom of the other; the new relational dynamic is founded on the premise that "in Christ there is no East or West", and that all believers are members together of one global church, bound together in common purpose.

Community exegesis and global theology—Sending churches must be brave and humble to acknowledge that some of the theological assumptions that undergird "traditional" STM values and practices are insufficient at best, and at worst promote unhealthy intercultural relationships and cultural damage. They must also ask: Do currently held (and uncritically defended) assumptions actually accomplish God's purposes—and even more to the point—what *are* God's purposes in a given time and place, for a particular people? The answers to such questions are likely to be found in the copowering dynamic of community exegesis; when West and East, North and South, work together to interpret scripture and discern truths to guide "mission", then a truly global theology emerges. Such a "reformed" theology offers new purposes and new goals

around which churches from disparate cultures can unify their efforts to live authentic witness and bless the world.

Early Contributors

** At minimum, one edited contribution per section will be included here.*

Biographical Information

Editor Biographies:

Dr. Forrest Inslee is a qualitative researcher, and the chair of the MA in International Community Development program at Northwest University. He created the program based in great part on the lessons he learned from his experiences as a missionary (both short and long-term) in Turkey.

Angel Meeks, a graduate student at Northwest University in the International Community Development program. Global missions has been part of her life since childhood and she has participated, led, and hosted over a dozen trips in the past several years. She is passionate about acknowledging the mistakes in STMs while highlighting the creative solutions that so many practitioners have experienced.

Contributor Biographies:

In progress.

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Contextualization in STMs

Without contextualization, short-term missions are bound to be limited to one specific model of global ministry that, while might work for some, will inevitably fail others. To produce successful STMs, contextualization must first be viewed from the culture of the hosts of these trips. For example, trip hosts must ask questions such as: What type of partnership would work in their specific cultural context? Or, what type of partnership is appropriate in this specific faith context? Simultaneously, contextualization must be regarded by the sending culture. In what ways can the Americans on this team best serve *and* be served on this trip? What context is the sending congregation coming from that enables them to form a deeper partnership with the hosts?

In light of the need for contextualization in STMs, I will detail the short-term mission movement as it is currently being experienced. Then, I will continue with an argument against the "one-model" approach to creating and implementing STMs and explain the importance of contextualization throughout the trip process. Importantly, I will encourage creativity among the hosts and participants as a primary catalyst for stimulating contextualization. The book proposal detailed above seeks to encourage the need for contextualization and creativity. Therefore, these topics are of the utmost importance in the creation of this anthology.

Background on the Short-term Mission Movement

To be blunt, the current STM phenomenon is overflowing with problems. When the short-term mission boom happened in the early 2000s, no one – not missiologists, pastors, missionaries, hosts – were prepared for the continued impact that these trips would have on global ministry. Nearly 20 years later, there is still confusion regarding the very *definition* of

short-term mission trips. There is no consensus on the length of trips, the biblical framework for trips, or the overall purpose of trips. And yet, in 2006 it was recorded that there are over 2 million STMs are sent out of the American church each year (Corbett and Fikkert 17).

While the problems with short-term trips can be overwhelming, in more recent years there has been progress in defining the fundamentals. When books like *Toxic Charity* and *When Helping Hurts* made their entrance into mainstream Christianity, many church leaders and laypeople paused long enough to take a clear look at their involvement with short-term trips. Before the works of Lupton, Fikkert, and Corbett, Robert J. Priest and other missiologist were dedicated to uncovering the details of the STM tidal wave that had washed over the American church.

Robert J. Priest is the missiologist that coined these trips as a *movement* that we have the responsibility to research. He states that "while it has never been difficult to find critics of short-term missions, or strong advocates, and while there is a burgeoning new body of books advocating and instructing on short-term missions, prior to 2003 very little actual research had been done on short-term missions and its role in the contemporary global mission scene (*Effective Engagement in Short-term Missions: Doing It Right!,* v). In 2006, Priest brought forth the much-needed data at the time that showed the rising level of participation in STMs (see fig. 1). However, the research has not kept up with the movement and we still find ourselves steeped in overwhelming inadequacy when it comes to understanding and implementing STMs.

Figure 1

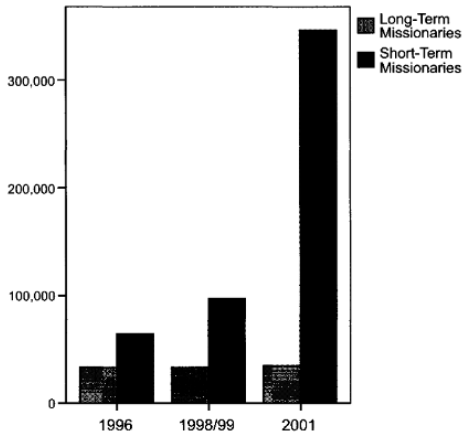

Figure 1: Data on U.S. Personnel for 690 Protestant Mission Agencies

Source: Priest, Robert J., et al. “Researching the Short-Term Mission Movement.” Missiology: An International Review, vol. 34, no. 4, 2006, pp. 431–450.

The confusion surrounding STMs is so great that there still is no concise definition of the term. Brian Howell, author of *A Short-Term Mission: An Ethnography of Christian Travel Narrative and Experience,* said "Given the modifier short-term, it might seem that the duration of a mission defines a short-term mission from some other sort. However, not only is the question of what constitutes "short" a debated point, but the definition of mission-and its differentiation from missions-is often contested as well" (ch. 2). Eventually, he provides a description of short-term trips as: "intentionally limited, organized, cross-cultural mission efforts for a pre-determined length of time without participants making a residency-based commitment of more than two years" (ch. 2). Of course, others in the field say that there is no way to decipher a timeline for this type of missionary activity which means that there can be no clear definition agreed upon (Priest 281). With over 777 million configurations of what we call "short-term missions", it has simply become too big of a phenomenon to adequately define (68). Obviously,

while great effort has been made to tame the STM movement, there remains lingering confusion about the purpose, size, and impact of these trips.

Contextualization and the "One-Model" Approach

The core of these issues is the misuse or avoidance of contextualization when beginning cross-cultural partnerships. Each short-term trip provides the potential to form a partnership between members of the global church. However, at the start of these projects, there must be an emphasis on contextualization rather than an assumption that what has worked once will work again in an entirely different culture and time. DJ Schuetze and Phil Steiner, authors of *Reciprocal Missions*, claim that "the greatest impact we can have on our short-term mission trips is through long-term humble reciprocal relationships" (6). If we are unwilling to enter into reciprocal relationships with those we are going to visit than we will be unlikely to understand the importance of contextualization. The next question, then, is what happens when we do not incorporate contextualization into the formation of STMs?

For too long there has been only one model for STMs. There are a plethora of "how-to" books written for STM leaders. While well-intended, these manuals reinforce the idea that six meetings, VBS supplies, neon-colored T-shirts, and a quick Google search about the culture you're dropping your team into will suffice. Efforts have been made to emphasize longevity and partnerships with hosts of STMs, but there is little information about how to create real, healthy partnerships. Perhaps this is because the answer will differ depending on the *context.* Contextualization allows for the model to widen and become a philosophy instead of a manual. It demands hosts and participants to be engaged in critical thinking about what type of partnership best fits their home cultures. In the end, it creates healthy, trust-filled partnerships among the global church through the means of short-term trips.

As mentioned above, there is a multitude of short-term mission trip manuals, guidebooks, handbooks, and workbooks available. One of the more popular guides is Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert's follow-up to *When Helping Hurts*, called *Helping Without Hurting In Short-Term Missions.* While their first book dedicated only one chapter to the topic of STMs, this guidebook is an online video-based study that explains how to do short-term mission trips without harming the trip beneficiaries. While Corbett and Fikkert again provide insight that caused pastors and trip participants to pause their current STM practices, they were writing specifically about trips that have the purpose of poverty alleviation. Because trips occur in different contexts and for different purposes, it is impossible to provide one simple answer of how to best organize and implement all the trips that fall under the umbrella term "short-term missions".

Take, for example, Daniel and Tara Rice who are missionaries in Tokyo, Japan. Currently, they are utilizing the global church partnerships that have been created through short-term trips to provide a larger volunteer base during their upcoming outreach plan for the 2020 Olympics that were going to take place in Tokyo (Rice). Would the teaching in *Helping Without Hurting* apply to their context? Likely not. Therefore, when we assume one new model will answer all of the questions and problems surrounding the STM phenomenon, we are left with rather large gaps due to the multiple contexts in which global ministry takes place. The answer then is prioritizing not one standard approach, but including flexibility and adaptation to local contexts.

Including Creativity in Contextualization

Hopefully, I have now provided a convincing argument for the need to contextualize in global ministry and short-term trips. To further expand, I will offer a more detailed perspective on creativity in STMs and global ministry. In the formation and implementation of these trips,

contextualization must be coupled with creativity. To break out of the current model, hosts and participants must move forward with bold ideas that seek to eliminate the harm that STMs have caused. This thought is the driving force behind the anthology proposed in the project portion of this thesis. Our desire for gathering contributors is to provide multiple examples and perspectives to challenge the status-quo of STMs and encourage readers to imagine unique ways for their communities to connect through relationships within the global church, all of which can only happen when those involved in STMs are willing to engage in creativity.

Authors Tom and David Kelley wrote about the importance of creativity in their book *Creative Confidence*. While the Kelley brothers are not speaking from a faith perspective, the main ideas still apply to this topic. Tom and David say that "our creative energy is one of our most precious resources. It can help us to find innovative solutions to some of our most intractable problems" (6). Furthermore, they are adamant that creativity is not only for the few artists or musicians but for all people to enjoy (7). When we forgo our God-given ability to be creative, we can fall into situations that do not take contextualization into account and cause more harm than good. Read the following story as an example of a church that did not open their eyes to the opportunity for contextualization in global ministry.

Creativity in Contextualization for Sending Congregations

Imagine a small, primarily Caucasian, American congregation. Their neighborhood is highly populated with Spanish-speaking immigrants from South America. The social issues surrounding them include children failing school due to inadequate ESL tutoring, undocumented men and women living in isolation out of fear of being deported, job insecurity, and increasing poverty. During their missions committee meeting, the leader tells the group of a short-term mission trip opportunity in Africa where the church's youth group has been invited to work in an

orphanage with children who are at risk of being sex trafficked. The committee is excited about the possibility, although none of them have any experience with sex trafficking or know anyone from the receiving country.

If the church's mission committee chooses to begin a partnership through STMs with this orphanage, are they doing something wrong? Maybe not. However, if instead, they chose to look at *their* surrounding context and think creatively about how an STM might fit into a larger ministry that God has for their congregation, they may choose to move in a different direction. For example, they could find themselves partnering with a school in Ecuador or a refugee shelter in Guatemala. That partnership may lead to bridges being built in their neighborhood, and provide the opportunity for relationships with their surrounding community that would enhance the impact that they have overseas. Furthermore, the STM could become part of a "glocal" ministry (global and local), where the church is offering ESL tutoring at their local elementary school. As they imagine the possibilities available, there is an opportunity to connect denominationally (Moe-Lobeda 244). In the end, there are several strategic ways for this church to connect cross-culturally if they allow themselves to think creatively.

I created the example above to paint a picture of what global ministry can look like when trip participants acknowledge contextualization in their ministry plan rather than fall into the assumptions of typical short-term mission practices. As Corbett and Fikkert wisely state, "A healthy, effective trip is merely one piece of a larger commitment to learning and engagement with what God is doing around the world and in our own communities" (25). This approach takes trust in God. Often, we in America are trapped in the mindset that we must be the saviors of every horrible problem the world is facing. The mindset is: If we don't do it, no one will. While we should be motivated to step into the challenges of our brothers and sisters, we must

also be wise in the way we strategically approach our global connections. For example, the church from the story can choose to trust that the Holy Spirit will move in a congregation that has a sex trafficking recovery program or one that has an existing connection with the receiving nation. The more we humble ourselves and see each congregation as part of a larger Body, the more likely it is that we can be part of forming a connection that will translate into real change.

Creativity in Contextualization for Hosts of STMs

Contextualization must not only be led by the sending participants, but also by the hosts of the trips. At the end of his work explaining the indices used to decipher global cultural differences, Geert Hofstede said "it is therefore not realistic to expect that all world citizens should become alike. Nor is it desirable or necessary that they should do so. Peoples will differ, but they have to learn to coexist without wanting others to become just like them. Any other road is a dead end" (477). The temptation is for leaders in the American church to expect the hosts they are visiting to bow down to the American culture. Often, visitors from the American church assume that they know the type of contextualization that is needed for the host cultures. In our paternalistic fashion, we take the place of "teacher" in cultures that are not our own. Rather than allow this type of behavior to continue, we must acknowledge the God-given ability for *all* people to engage in creative thinking, and encourage our partners overseas to approach us with their ingenuity of how STMs should be done in their specific contexts.

To continue the example of the Rice's in Tokyo, Japan, they believe strongly that the use of STMs as a global church connection should be guided by the Japanese church. In an interview I conducted with the Rice's, Daniel remarks,

> The pipe dream for us...is seeing short-term team churches, or short-term teams which obviously represent churches back home in the states...befriend those local churches here and then we kind of try to step out of the way...And so, because they [the Japanese church and American church] have that relationship they can do things more frequently, they can do things more deeply, and you know, it's just a richer experience of what we're seeing right now (Rice).

Of course, even this ministry in Japan is an example of why contextualization is needed. In Japan, there is a theologically sound church that is in a developed country. Continuing our conversation about STMs, Daniel Rice said,

> It may be wise to maintain that middle-man, that cultural informant in other countries in other cultures. But for the Japanese context, Japanese have the capabilities a lot of time to converse and to work in some form or fashion. And so for us, it's a matter, honestly, of trusting the Lord. And trying not to white knuckle everything and control everything the teams are doing and trying to...to ensure that this thing happens. Because it can happen if we let it go a little bit and let the local pastors and the local church members build relationships with these teams (Rice).

While these missionaries in Japan are working to back away from leading ministry between the American church and the Japanese church, others are not in the same place. While visiting a ministry in Reynosa, Mexico the leader of a specific organization laughed as she remarked to me, "after all of these years, we've finally figured out how to deal with short-term mission trips...we don't let them anywhere near

the community!" In a later interview, an employee at the same organization said mission trips "have to be done with someone on the ground, all the time, who has a pulse on the neighborhood and loves the neighborhood, so you're not just blowing in somewhere, doing something" (Knobloch).

In a poverty-stricken neighborhood in Mexico, the way a short-term trip is implemented will look different than in the bustling city of Tokyo, Japan. It would be disrespectful if American missionaries in Japan attempted to referee teams of people that the Japanese church can easily form relationships with on their own. Likewise, it would be unwise for the ministry in Reynosa to have a hands-off approach to teams of people coming into their neighborhood without any prior understanding of appropriate behavior when living amongst poverty. In each of these scenarios, short-term trips must be rethought to be *creative, community-centered, and contextualized.* The Mexico ministry must grapple with its current STM model and ask if it is healthy for the participants and the community. Similarly, the Tokyo team is in the process of reimagining the way that they have interacted and led STMs. In each scenario, contextualization is vital when rethinking how these potential global church partnerships should be formed and creativity is vital to constructing solutions and avoiding slipping into the same traps as before.

Conclusion

There is such beauty available when we acknowledge the specific context in which God has placed us. That beauty expands when we turn our eyes to our brothers and sisters and appreciate where God has placed them. When we in the church acknowledge the need for contextualization in short-term mission trips, we will have a greater possibility of interacting in respectful, healthy, and proactive ways that further the Gospel. Relying on one model of STMs prohibits us from acting as the Body of Believers that Christ has formed us to be. In contrast,

when we contextualize our global ministries, we can appreciate our unique gifts and purposes that are specific to our cultural context. Contextualizing trips and global ministry acts as a catalyst for creative, critical thinking in which we can begin to imagine alternatives to STMs. When we do this, we will expand our relationships, trust, and partnership throughout the global church and continue to see the Gospel spread throughout the world.

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Qualitative Research Methods

On February 17th, 2019, I drove into the parking lot of a large church as a policeman directed the line of cars that were waiting to park. As I passed coffee stands and smiling church members wearing volunteer lanyards, hundreds of people filed through the front doors. I knew that I would need assistance if I was to find Room 210 in this large building. A kind older man led me up an elevator and through long hallways until we reached a door with a sign that said, "Welcome to Adventures in Missions!" It was here that I began my journey into qualitative research regarding the topic of short-term missions.

Walking into this room made me feel as if I was back at my first mission trip meeting. As a young teen, I began participating in STMs every summer, eventually transitioning into longer trips with mission organizations during and after college. I remember the utter excitement that I felt as I realized how big the world is and that I could be a part of helping others. I remember the building frustration as I encountered extreme poverty one day, and then gluttony and ridiculous wealth the next. I then remember settling into the apathy laced with anger as I decided that STMs simply had too many flaws to be salvaged. Now, as I entered fieldwork, I recalled all of those emotions return, and yet I felt separate from them. Employing qualitative research methods during fieldwork allowed me to evaluate my personal experience with short-term trips while objectively observing the current trends in the movement. I walked into the Adventures in Mission class with hope instead of anger, critical thinking instead of criticism, and determination instead of defeat.

Qualitative research allows for the whole story, mine included, to be brought into light as STMs continue to be understood and adapted to best connect the global church. In the following,

I will explain qualitative research methods, the characteristics of qualitative research, and the similar values between this type of research and international community development (ICD), and the unique distinctions of qualitative research. I will then explain how qualitative research was used in my fieldwork, as well as the need for evaluation in STMs.

Why Qualitative Research Methods?

Qualitative research is the counterpart of quantitative research. While the former collects data to analyze, qualitative research uses "words as data" (Merriam and Tisdell 6). While quantitative researchers are focused on gathering numbers to understand a phenomenon, the qualitative researcher is focused on studying people. The goal is to understand how and why people live their lives in certain ways (Merriam and Tisdell 15).

Whereas quantitative researchers rely on statistical mechanisms to decipher their data, qualitative researchers themselves are the conduit for data collection and analysis. In other words, "the researcher's perspective is acknowledged as an integral part of what is recorded about the social world that she or he is studying" (230 Bamberger). This can seem like a risk. However, allowing the researcher to become part of the research process is what allows qualitative research to provide a rich and honest understanding of the observed phenomenon. Furthermore, qualitative research is an inductive process, meaning the research gathered is used to "build concepts, hypotheses, or theories rather than deductively testing hypotheses as in positivist research" (Merriam and Tisdell 17). Lastly, using "rich description" is an essential component of all qualitative research. Words, pictures, stories, and artifacts replace numbers, data, and graphs, providing insight into a culture that quantitative research lacks. Understanding how qualitative research methods function is an important first step to understanding its value and strengths in contexts of need.

Qualitative Research Characteristics and Strengths

“The Good Missionary: An African Orphan on What He Loves (and Doesn’t) about Short-Term Mission Teams" is the eye-catching title of an article that describes the perspective of a teenage orphan, Samuel, and his experience with short-term missionaries. Samuel Gachagua and his guardian, Claire Diaz-Ortiz, work together to paint a picture of both the harm and good that STMs cause. What Diaz-Ortiz and Gachagua intuitively understood is that there is power in telling a story that cannot be found by simply providing statistics. The two of them could have shown data about orphans in Kenya, but instead, they provided rich description that brings the reader into the story. He writes that " at the age of 11, I lived with my 13-year-old brother and 5-year-old sister. We found ways to survive, selling plastic bags of water to earn money for food. But we regularly dropped out of school" (Diaz-Ortiz and Gachagua). It is with this description and story at the forefront that the authors then lay out their ideas for changing STMs: rethinking the goals of STMs, don't try to get too close too fast, learn what the partner needs, and follow up (Diaz-Ortiz and Gachagua).

This article provides an example of the strengths and values of qualitative research in the specific context of human need. One of the core principles of beginning qualitative research is that you follow your curiosity. This type of research not only allows but encourages the researchers to feel an emotional connection to the topic. Throughout the process, the researcher goes from "general interest, curiosity, or doubt about a situation, to a specific statement of the research problem" (Merriam and Tisdell 77). The beauty of this type of research in connection with contexts of need is that it does not ask the researcher to be devoid of emotion. Rather, your emotional response to a topic is what drives the research. Of course, there is a professionalism that qualitative researchers must maintain for the research to remain accurate. This forces

researchers to challenge themselves to allow emotion and experience while not being blinded by it as they begin researching.

The authors of *FieldWorking*, Bonnie Stone Sunstein and Elizabeth Chiseri-Strater, explain that "it is our job to reveal our informant's perspectives and experiences rather than our own. And so our questions must allow us to learn something new, something that our informant knows and we don't. We must learn how to ask" (221). Curiosity and emotion will lead qualitative researchers into topics of meaning. It will allow researchers to understand the depth of a topic that cannot be reflected in data and graphs. It will also provide a learning experience of self-discovery for the researcher as they learn to listen and ask questions that will reveal trends and an understanding of their specific topic.

Qualitative Research and ICD Values

Three of the core components of International Community Development (ICD) are listening, copowerment, and humility. These three ideas are central values for those involved in ICD because they create a foundation of belief and practice. Qualitative methods are the obvious choice of research for an ICD practitioner because it directly correlates with these three values. In the following, I will delve deeper into each of these core values and relate them to ICD and qualitative research, making a case for the benefit of using qualitative research in the field of community development.

In qualitative research, individuals are taught to ask specific types of questions. These include hypothetical, devil's advocate, ideal position, and interpretive questions (Merriam and Tisdell 120). In ICD, we are taught the qualitative research method of listening with all of our senses. Though the asking of questions is vital, the way we listen to the response is of equal importance.

In research conducted by Rob Barber, he attempts to understand the interaction between Japanese hosts and STM participants through a series of interviews with the Japanese liaisons. Barber was a former long-term church planting missionary in Japan and knew that his background in receiving STMs in Japan would impact his research (Barber 312). Similar to how I felt conducting my qualitative research, Barber had to understand how his experience would affect his relationships and observations. Simultaneously, he had to separate himself from his experiences so that he could be open to learning something new. As Sunstein and Strater said "what is often more difficult to achieve than making the unknown become familiar is making the familiar seem strange" (8). In Barber's case, STMs and the involvement of the Japanese hosts seemed familiar, but as he listened to the Japanese involved, he was able to learn the ways that trips could be improved in his context. Qualitative research's emphasis on listening allowed Barber to truly understand the effects of STMs in Japan.

To engage in this type of listening, where we truly hear the thoughts and experiences of those around us, the qualitative researcher must enter into relationships with humility. Humility is one of the more difficult values to quantify. The tangibility of a humble attitude is seen through the distinct actions of the researcher or community developer. It is refusing to fall into ethnocentrism, paternalism, or authoritarianism. Those who desire to help and to observe must enter into communities with the knowledge that the pride that is ingrained in us will be a difficult obstacle to overcome. But, when we encompass humility in our everyday lives, it will be seen in the way that we interact with our research. Qualitative research asks that the researchers be humble in all interactions, as an observer, listener, and learner. ICD does the same.

Humility and listening are all components of a larger ICD concept called "copowerment". Copowerment is an alternative to empowerment, which can assume that one side has all of the

power to give the other. ICD is adamant that every community can make positive changes for themselves. We copower one another when we invite each other into the change-making that takes place through development. Qualitative research is also a mutual process of growth. The researcher is a part of the research, with the assumption being that they are participating as a learner during the observation and interview process.

For example, Sunstein and Chiseri-Strater said "we carry our sense of place, our personal geography, into our fieldwork" (168). I have had so much personal experience in global ministry through evangelical churches. I remember being a thirteen-year-old, sitting through my first mission trip meeting. It all seemed so exciting and adventurous. When I attended focal points (meetings, classes, etc.) during my research, I viewed them from such a different perspective because of my personal history. The past that I have with this topic influenced my research and allowed me to grow personally. The goal of qualitative research is to be as aware as possible of how your past is changing how you observe the present. Because both actors (the researcher and those being researched) are visible, it allows for copowerment to take place.

Distinctions of Qualitative Research and Connections to ICD

The above section has made a case for the similarities within qualitative research and ICD. This specific type of research and development share key qualities that create a framework from which they function. The themes of listening, humility, and copowerment allow qualitative research to be used in ICD in a way that other research methods cannot. While quantitative research provides benefits for data collection, I will provide an example that illustrates the importance of using qualitative methods in ICD.

In almost all community development work, the phrase "the poor" is used. Although we hear this term, there are often misunderstandings surrounding its meaning. Quantitative

researchers draw on the data from the global poverty line and calculate the exact number of people qualified as "poor". And so, academics, economists, and religious leaders were all part of the attempt to "solve" poverty without really knowing what it meant. In the early 2000s, the Voices of the Poor project published three books with definitions of "poverty" that were spoken by "the poor" themselves (Myers 32). The results shocked academic developers and those who were invested in working to eradicate poverty. The research found that the material needs of those deemed "the poor" were relatively small, although, of course, important. Even more surprising was the psychological desire to be rid of poverty. To those experiencing poverty, it was defined as a lack of dignity and respect rather than a lack of material items. To those experiencing it, the end of poverty would look like "peace of mind, lack of anxiety, being God-fearing, and being happy or satisfied with life" (Myers 32).

Myers writes, "The world tends to view the poor as a group that is helpless, thus giving ourselves permission to look down on them and even play god in their lives" (105). People who are spending their careers working towards the betterment of "the poor" must cringe at Myers' statement. That is why qualitative research, like what the Voices of the Poor project employed, is incredibly important. Qualitative research, in this case, took a word (poverty) that has been transformed into a title (the poor) and refused to let its familiarity prohibit a deeper evaluation of its meaning. The qualitative research used in this project encouraged the researcher to approach the topic as a listener who was willing to be humble so that copowerment could take place for continued solutions to end poverty. In the end, a new, more accurate, version of poverty is now known and used by those who have joined together to fight against the extreme poverty that is still experienced all over the world.

Qualitative Research in my Fieldwork and Project Proposal

As stated at the beginning of this paper, I embarked on qualitative research in the field of global ministry and short-term mission trips. I aimed to interview as many individuals as possible who were connected with the sending and receiving of these trips. Curiosity, and if I'm honest, frustration, is what compelled me to begin studying this topic. In the following, I will explain my methodology of qualitative research and its results.

To begin, I collected information from a variety of participants that I knew were implementing STMs in some way. I set up interviews with pastors and global ministry leaders from churches in several denominations, of differing sizes and ages, and with multiple backgrounds and involvement levels of STMs. Some interviews were with pastors of megachurches who sent out dozens of trips each year. Others were with churches of more modest size, who were just beginning to strategize about their STM involvement. The variety within my interviews gave me a variety of perspectives on the prevailing trends within the movement.

At the start of my research, my purpose was to better understand the ways a short-term mission trip can facilitate long-term relationships between U.S. churches and international churches. The study was guided by the following questions:

1. What should the role of an STM be within a church's long-term global outreach program?
2. How can STMs be reformed to become part of a sustainable ministry; including partnership and mutual support between hosts and sending congregations?
3. Will changing the language surrounding STMs contribute to producing less harmful trips?

While these questions began my inquiry, they expanded as the interviews continued. I hosted over twenty semi-structured interviews and observed several events and conferences related to STMs. The challenge for me was to learn to listen to my interviewees without offering my opinion on the topic. I gained valuable knowledge from global mission leaders, like Carson Jones who said (regarding trip participants) that, "there is a real danger is in just coming home and going back to life as usual" (Jones). Also, Chris Peppler, pastor of a FourSquare church, who said, "Mission is the vehicle of which discipleship happens" (Peppler). And Cyrus Mad-Bondo who explained leading STMs as shepherding his people through a type of spiritual retreat (Mad-Bondo). Every person that I interviewed held unique and passionate views on the STM movement and were eager to share once they understood that they were being heard. It is the goal of the project listed above to highlight several of these voices and share the insights and creative ways that these practitioners are reimaging STMs. None of that would be possible without the use of qualitative research.

Qualitative Research and Project Evaluation

What I realized as I began my fieldwork on this topic, was that part of the problem with the current STM movement is the lack of evaluation. In his study on short-term trips, Lierin Probasco echoes many other missiologists by saying that the extent of STM involvement, the goals, and the outcomes remain unclear (3). Because of this, global ministry, and specifically STMs, does not have a finalized theory of change. A theory of change is defined as how a group of stakeholders can plan to meet their joint, long-term goals (Anderson 3). If STMs are assuming that they can change something (whether it is the host community or the trip participants) there must be a clear theory of change that defines the process. In the proposed project, however, I am arguing for a more tailored approach to theories of change. Instead of the one model approach to

short-term trips that could follow a universal theory of change, I recommend that creativity and contextualization dictate the form of cross-cultural relationships among the global church.

For my project specifically, we must implement a theory of change that accounts for outside occurrences, required outcomes, length of long-term goals, resources, planned intervention, and community change (Anderson 8). Therefore, while there may not be space for a universal theory of change in my proposal, there is a call for contextualized program evaluation. Each church partnership must evaluate the intended outcomes, assumptions, and goals of their anticipated relationship if they expect success.

Conclusion

When I first began qualitative research study through my fieldwork, I was ignorant of how useful qualitative methods would be to both my area of study and my personal life. Instead of attempting to be void of emotion, I was able to use my experiences to reflect on what I was observing and hearing. Instead of only collecting data, I was able to listen to stories and hear about the true need for reformation in STMs and global ministry. Qualitative research collects stories and relies on rich description to create an accurate understanding of a phenomenon. It is complimentary to ICD because of the similarities in values. Listening, humility, and copowerment are mirrored in both fields. It is these strengths that allow qualitative research methods to produce honest and powerful research.

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International Community Development Values

The International Community Development program (ICD) attracts individuals from all over the world and teaches them important values that create humble, equipped practitioners in a variety of fields related to community development. There are several ICD values that I have pondered and experienced throughout this program. Recently, I have begun to discover what my motivations were in choosing the ICD path, I have learned to follow my curiosity into the topics that interest me, and I have begun to discern the path forward into my vocational calling and personal philosophy of development. In the following, I will progress through each of these topics and express my gratitude to the ICD program and the lessons that it has taught me.

Personal Transformation

When I declared, at age 14, that I was going to become a missionary, no one in my home blinked twice. My grandparents were missionaries for 40 years, my oldest sister and her husband had become missionaries through the International Mission Board, and many of our friends were living their lives overseas as church planters. In the very first chapter of *Let Your Life Speak* by Parker J. Palmer, he said "trying to live someone else's life, or to live by an abstract norm, will invariably fail – and may even do great damage" (4). As I attempted to find my place as a traditional "missionary", I ran into the truth of Palmer's words. I presumed to know exactly how God wanted to use me. It would be just how he used everyone else in my family, of course! Naturally, shock and identity crisis began to set in as I realized the traditional missionary route was not what I imagined.

As I began working with organizations and churches, I quickly became what I call a Renegade Missionary. Because I did not fit in with many mission organizations and the organizations did not fulfill my expectations, it became easier to travel and minister alone. It

does not take long to recognize your limits when you make the mistake of trying to do ministry without community. Palmer comments, "If I try to be or do something noble that has nothing to do with who I am, I may look good to others and to myself for a while. But the fact that I am exceeding my limits will eventually have consequences" (47).

I had gone to work in Japan as an unaffiliated missionary, partnering with mission sending agencies. After four months with little personal support, I returned home in 2015, faced with the reality that I would need a community to complement my weaknesses and bring forth my strengths. Two years later, I had become so used to adapting to whatever the need was in my community, that when my supervisor in Sweden asked me if I was a developer, a connector, or a visionary, I could give her examples of times where I had stepped up to be all three. Through introspection, conversation, and prayer, the Lord began to inform me of my strengths by revealing to me my weaknesses.

While a traditional missionary in my former denomination was a church planter who casts vision and inspires, my strengths gear towards seeing visions come to fruition and deeply impacting a few individuals. I could dream up a vision and teach in front of crowds, but it was not where I felt comfortable, happy, or confident. Throughout the past few years, I have been able to teach small groups of internationals and assist with developing the ideas of others in my community. I find myself smiling after helping my big-vision friends work out the details of their dreams. I finally feel released from the burden I had placed on myself to be the one with the idea. I am starting to experience what Palmer describes when he said "When we live in the close-knit ecosystem called community, everyone follows and everyone leads" (74).

One of my favorite quotes is from a devotional written by Amy Carmichael, where she said "We don't walk spiritually by electric light, but by a hand-held lantern. And a lantern shows

only the next step – not several steps ahead" (26). God continues to reveal the next step in regards to my vocation. I am thankful that He has given me the past few years to delve into understanding how He created me. As I've worked through the hindrances of putting expectations on myself opposite of the person God has created me to be, I have found that He has given me many other gifts to share. Leadership has begun to look like teamwork, community has become essential, and I can experience joy in the roles where God leads me.

When I arrived in the ICD program, I had one topic that I refused to consider for a thesis topic: short-term missions. Throughout my experience with STMs, I had grown weary and frustrated by the misunderstanding and harm that the trips cause. Of course, as seen above, the proposal is an anthology that is centered around the topic of STMs. So what changed for me? The values and concepts learned in ICD have provided a framework for my frustration with the short-term mission movement. What I've learned through ICD has allowed me to articulate my beliefs and ideas with an intelligent and understanding voice. Diving into the topics of justice, culture, ethnography, and more have given me the confidence to stand before what was once a daunting topic and link arms with others that are working towards positive change in global ministry and short-term trips.

When I began this graduate program, I was unaware of how much soul-searching and introspection would be involved in ICD. I remember in our first class, we were challenged to dissect our cultural norms before attempting to observe others. Since the very beginning, this program has been a journey of looking into my past so that I can better discern my future. At times it has brought me joy to think through the process that has brought me where I am now. However, there is also pain as I look back at the mistakes that I made out of pride and ignorance. My personal transformation is still in progress. Thankfully, through learning and applying ICD

values, I am more equipped to humbly and intelligently move forward into my vocation and values.

Social Justice and the Church

One of my favorite parts about the structure of the ICD program is that each class and assignment provides the opportunity to build on the student's specific topic of interest. From the beginning, I have been asking the same question in each class context: how does this topic affect the global church? The anthology proposal is formed from an understanding of culture, the global church, and justice that has expanded as I have learned from the voices of authors such as Cynthia Mo-Lobeda, Miroslav Volf, Parker Palmer, and others. While studying the topic of short-term trips and global ministry, I have been able to look back on what I have learned in the past and adapt a new framework of understanding. This is not a comfortable topic. The church, especially the church in America, is rightly criticized for its ignorance, apathy, and extreme individualism. Conviction and sorrow have followed me through this process of discovering how social justice and the church coincide.

In 2017, I spent several months living among refugees and immigrants in Stockholm, Sweden. While there were few Christians, the believers that I met had incredible stories of conversion, suffering, joy, and faith. I learned much and walked away with an increase in both faith *and* doubt. My faith swelled from seeing the God of the Bible so active in the world today. Simultaneously, my doubt amplified as I began to wonder if I had ever really known the true God, or if my church culture had provided me with a distorted view of His power and His plan. For example, before my trip, I had met with my pastor of a large church in Florida. I explained to him where the Lord had called me and asked if the church, of which I was a member and former staff, would be my "sending" congregation. He hesitantly agreed, but not before warning me that

parishioners would surely be distant, or even angry because of the area of the world I was going to live in.

While many American churches are willing to open their eyes to global Christianity, others are reluctant to prioritize connecting with believers of different backgrounds because of how they challenge the American way of expressing the Christian faith. I believe that the American church needs people who are educated and passionate about connecting our congregations with the global church. How do we make a bridge between the Western church, that is so saturated in wealth, comfort, and spiritual apathy, and the thriving persecuted church in the rest of the world? How do we become one global church, all believing the truth of the Scripture and seeing it lived out in our very lives?

For those of us who have been raised in the church**,** it may be easy to miss the injustice that many American churches perpetuate. To put it plainly, the American church allows for injustice by hoarding, ignoring and missing out on the wonderful joy that comes from acknowledging the broader global church. So few American churches have a healthy view of the global world and the global church. We promote ideas like the "Prosperity Gospel" which spits in the face of those who suffer for the sake of the Gospel. Conversely, we fall into the "White Savior" complex and believe that we are the "real" church that needs to educate or help the "poor" converts. To root out the pride that perpetuates these beliefs, we, the American church, will need to distance ourselves from our culture, provide a community that allows space for suffering, and listen and learn with humble hearts from our brothers and sisters in the church. Simply put, I believe that to have a just outlook on the global, unified church, we in America must acknowledge what Volf said about the church in *Exclusion and Embrace*: "You are not only you; others belong to you too" (51).

The American church must be able to do the difficult work of separating from our culture while also remaining in it. In *Exclusion and Embrace*, Volf speaks at length regarding the danger of holding too tightly to culture. "Our coziness with the surrounding culture has made us blind to many of its evils that, instead of calling them into question, we offer our own versions of them – in God's name and with a good conscience" (36). He continues saying, "What should be the relation of the churches to the cultures they inhabit? The answer lies, I propose, in cultivating the proper relation between distance from the culture and belonging to it" (37).

I agree with Volf, that the church in America has not figured out the proper relation between belonging in our culture and distancing ourselves from it. This is seen in the way we separate and elevate ourselves from the rest of the church. If Christians are able to gain a healthy understanding of identifying with culture and global faith, I believe that the door will open to unification among the church. Volf aptly said "Christians take a distance from their own culture because they give the ultimate allegiance to God and God's promised future" (51). Throughout this ICD program, I have become convinced that the church must prioritize the unity of global Believers and identify as a Christ-follower above all else. When we accomplish this mindset shift, we can identify with the rest of the church in a way that points us towards unification that is centered on our shared eternity.

Copowerment

In connection with the topic of social justice, copowerment, one of the central values of ICD, is an alternative to the term "empowerment" in that it allows for an understanding that both actors have power to give and receive. Instead of a community developer entering a community and empowering those in need, copowerment begins with an understanding that the community and the developer are in mutual relationship and have much to learn from one another.

Copowerment, while simple and abstract, changes the tangible ways that development is accomplished. In my context, copowerment is vital when thinking about how the church interacts as a global Body and how short-term trips can be part of that relationship.

The main tenant to the above proposal on short-term trips is the need for creativity and contextualization. In her article "God's Design: The Arts as a Way of Being Human, Learning Truth, and Doing Justice", Rosie Perara writes on the importance of creativity in our spiritual lives. She quotes the famous theologian Francis Schaeffer who said: "being in the image of the Creator, we are called upon to have creativity" (104). This is such a beautiful reminder to me, and I know it will continue to be so as I delve into the heavy work of justice and the global church. God has created us to be creative. He enjoys our unique expressions and speaks to us through the creative overflow of our hearts and minds. Creativity and contextualization cannot happen in STMs without copowerment. There must be a belief in mutual reciprocity and respect so that new and creative ideas can be formed that benefit all those involved. If one area of the global church assumes that they alone have the ability to empower another part of the church, then they are already missing out on the mutually strengthening relationship that God had in mind for them.

Mutuality

The proposal written above seeks to incorporate the essence of copowerment throughout the entire book. One aspect of copowerment that is seen in the anthology proposal is that of mutuality; a theme that is missing in much of what is written on American church culture. Similar to copowerment, mutuality in missions means entering into relationships where "both sides actively pursue the relationship and are free to reciprocate actions and feelings, which leads to mutuality (Sharabany). As an example, in the Missiological Review, Marcus Dean discusses

the importance of mutuality in mission. Specifically, he explains the complexity of financial inequality in a mutual relationship in missions.

> Mutuality allows us to see that partnerships and relationships can be vital without financial equality because we recognize that each brings valid ministry resources to one table. “These resources and skills need not necessarily be equal in quantity or quality, but they must be recognized by both partners as equal in value” (Bush and Lutz,1990: 62). True mutuality is, in essence, contributing what the other cannot, as we move towards a common goal. Mutuality allows us to move away from the tangible, into the intangible. Perhaps what we in the West need cannot be measured or quantified" (Dean 276).

All of the conversations about mutuality are linked to the idea of copowerment. We must have both concepts in the conversation about redefining global ministry. Copowerment allows for the mutuality that Dean explains; the acknowledgment that every part of the global church has something invaluable to offer the others. Some may be tangible, others may not, but true mutuality and copowerment will not occur until we realize the value of the gifts that God has given us to share with our brothers and sisters in the global church.

Theology and Philosophy of Service & Future Implications

The concept of neighbor-love stems from the biblical command to “love your neighbor as yourself” (Moe-Lobeda 165). It would thus stand to reason that the Christian church would be the forerunners of acting out neighbor-love. However, in both my current work and my fieldwork this summer, I have seen little neighbor-love in the American church. From the beginning of this process, I have been convicted of the role of the American church in topics of global ministry, justice, leadership, and development. Neighbor-love, as Moe-Lobeda calls it, is the radical act of

extending compassion throughout the globalized world. This has impacted my view of how the church should love and how I should love and serve others. First, I will expound upon my own theological and philosophical framework that has evolved throughout this program, and then I will connect it to the broader topic of which I am studying.

In *Soul Feast*, Marjorie Thompson quotes William O. Paulsell who said "It is unlikely that we will deepen our relationship with God in a casual or haphazard manner. There will be a need for some intentional commitment and some reorganization in our own lives" (149). The truth is that healthy spirituality and healthy leadership do not just randomly appear in the lives of leaders. We must ponder, pray, and work towards becoming leaders that are worthy of being followed. Grace abounds when we fail. And we will fail! However, it is important to me that I have a well thought out framework for how I plan to live my life and vocation. Three important personal goals for me are that of devotional practices based off of spiritual disciplines, hospitality and generosity which I believe are some of the most important areas of the Christian life, and cultivating simplicity which reflects my choice to live a minimalist lifestyle, dedicated to ethical consumption and simplicity. I have shaped my values in hopes that the Lord will move in my soul and mold me into a worthy leader in the church and an intentional follower of Christ.

Marjorie Thompson and Parker Palmer provide helpful guides for shaping my personal values and vocation. Moe-Lobeda, however, speaks to the structural sin that must be fought against. She said that "charity is a strong and necessary response to God's call to love neighbor as self. However, alone it is NOT a turn away from a renunciation of structural sin" (92). As churches in the global north open their eyes to the reality of life in the global south, we must begin to accept our part in the structural sin that has brought so many to this position of suffering. Through my current and future vocation, I want to hold both personal and communal

values and sin at the forefront of the space where we can reimagine what global ministry and partnerships could look like. I want to become the type of leader that leads collectively through "collective action, dialogue, and collaboration" (Kuenkel 29). As Petra Kuenkel, author of *The Art of Leading Collectively*, said "Reconnecting with our heart and reviving our passion for collaborative change is a journey with no final destination, but a journey that offers us a promise: We will become more consciously part of the larger story and the potential of human evolution" (258). As I continue to learn and grow in the area of global ministry, I want the ICD values to be obvious in both my personal and professional life so that I can lead collaboratively and confidently as part of the change-making that produces a healthier global church.

Conclusion

People are in a constant state of transformation. Throughout my life, transformation has led me into the ICD program. It is here, in ICD, that I have gained the knowledge to articulate my values and grow in fundamental best practices of development. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about how the American church interacts as part of the global Body and how we can improve the call of social justice in the global church. As I followed my curiosity throughout researching STMs and global ministry, I was able to understand how the ICD value of copowerment is an integral aspect of mutuality which is key to the reimagining of STMs. My proposal would not exist if it weren't for the values and instruction of ICD. Furthermore, I would not be a qualified, confident, and humble practitioner if I had not joined the ICD program.

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