SHORT-TERM MISSION AS PILGRIMAGE
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Introduction

The concept of short-term missions remains a phenomenon which offers fruitful exploration as a kind of Christian pilgrimage. Diverse bodies of literature demonstrate that those who travel with a purpose of Christian charitable ends, or those who travel in the name of Christ, would (or should) travel in a way that is different from those who don't possess these motives. I approach this study as a descriptive way to understand the environment of short-term missions with a focus on those who choose to express their faith through mission pilgrimage.

Short-Term Mission Research

Many of the initial research initiatives related to short-term missions (STM) evaluate the growing phenomenon in relation to the self-perceived outcomes of short-term missions. This research focuses on the perceived benefits or results of short-term missions from the perspective of the short-termers themselves. The research seeks to measure the perspective often reported as fact in Christian magazines, from the church pulpit, and in traditional thinking that short-term missions causes participants to decide to become career missionaries.

Many leaders believe that support of global missions increases as a result of people being able to experience the mission field first hand. Additionally, people hold a common belief that those who participate in STM undergo a changed perception of culture and those ethnically different from themselves when they return from a short-term mission trip. Others hold a perception that short-term mission projects make a lasting impact on those who host short-termers. Rarely do leaders question or challenge theses truisms (Ver Beek 2007, 475). For instance, recent research (Moreau 2008) traces statistics from 1996 to 2005, showing both a dramatic increase of short-term mission involvement, and a substantial increase in overseas missionaries. However, during that same period of time, the number of long-term missionaries and middle term missionaries (1 to 4 years) declined.

Tommy Purvis provides an early study which seeks to evaluate short-term missions funding. Purvis (1993) surveyed 79 short-term volunteers from the 38 churches of the Caldwell/Lyon Baptist Association (sub-group of the Kentucky Baptist Convention) who had gone on short-term mission trips to Brazil and Kenya. Sixty-eight participants responded to a post-trip survey and 24 were interviewed before, immediately following and six months after returning from their trip. He then triangulated these answers with 13 years of mission's giving records from these 38 churches and reported that their giving had increased by 66.8% from 1981 to 1992. However, Purvis made the mistake of not adjusting for inflation in the research. After adjusting for inflation, mission giving increased only 7% over 11 years or 0.7% a year. An additional finding revealed that 89% of the participants received subsidies amounting to up to half the cost of their trip by the Kentucky Baptist Convention, funds which came out of this same mission's fund— the total amount given to long-term missionaries, then, would have gone down over these years. The surprising finding in Purvis' study was that the self-perception remained

quite different from reality. Kurt Ver Beek (2008) developed a quantitative study which seeks to measure the same perceptions several years after Purvis' research. Ver Beek asked in his research, "To what extent do short-term missions bring about lasting positive change in participants?" Ver Beek presents his own findings and also reflects upon the findings of other recent short-term mission research. He speculates that short-term missions may not engender any substantial positive effect on the people who go on short-term missions or on the people in mission settings who receive the STM participants. One should note at this point that some of the initial data from Purvis' study did indicate a positive change. What is unclear is whether or not this positive perspective endures. Ver Beek acknowledges that some of the research he references possessed small sample sizes or used measures of faith maturity where the particular students initially measure so high that any measurable change proved unlikely, distorting any real measure of change in participants. Even with these challenges, Ver Beek found that a trend over a sizable body of research does give sufficient basis for questioning the long-term impact of short-term missions, even if the same research does not yield substantial conclusions without further research.

Ver Beek compares his findings with 13 quantitative studies of short-term missions which used some sort of independent measure to corroborate the changes in the participants' lives. Eleven of the 13 studies found little or no significant positive impact from the short-term mission trip in the lives of participants. Notable studies which Ver Beek references are Wilson (1999), who used the Faith Maturity Scale on 27 youth who went on a nine day mission trip to Mexico, Kirby (1995), who evaluated two short-term mission teams from the U.S. to Romania and measured their knowledge of and attitude towards missions, giving, and time spent in private prayer, Beers (1999), who studied 171 college students who participated in a one-month school sponsored "study abroad missions," and who were given the *Faith Maturity Scale* and the *Growth in Mature Faith Index* (GMFI). Ver Beek also references Blezien (2004) who works to answer the question, "to what extent, if any, is the cross-cultural sensitivity of undergraduate college students influenced by participation in summer international short-term mission experiences?" Tuttle's (1998) study of college students is also utilized by Ver Beek. That study also used the *Belief and Commitment Scale* (BCS) and the *Faith Maturity Scale* to measure the extent to which respondents were moved by the beauty of creation. Another key research initiative conducted by Priest, Dischinger, Rasmussen, and Brown (2006), which is actually the culmination of three research initiatives, seeks to measure ethnocentrism, attitudes about serving as a career missionary, materialism, and mission giving.

There is a question that naturally surfaces related to this phenomenon called short-term missions. If there is a perception that short-term missions are too costly and seem to have very few actual benefits (and may even have adverse results), "why do so many people feel compelled to participate in short-term missions?" The objective of this study is to explore literature beyond the explicit studies mentioned above which seek to address the impetus for short-term missions and the fertile environment for a large-scale phenomenon such as short-term missions.

I have attempted to focus on a wide variety of literature that have a unifying thread of larger societal and theological shifts which give an understanding to the context of the escalating

phenomenon of short-term missions. Within the areas of social theory, tourism, anthropology of tourism, niche tourism, missional theology, spiritual pilgrimage, and missiology, there are substantive bodies of literature which help to understand the environment of short-term missions. For this study, I have selectively read and incorporated representative and seminal literature from these areas to focus on developing a basis for understanding short-term missions as an expression of larger social themes.

Searching for Authenticity

Although the popularity of short-term missions from the U.S. has come into focus primarily in the past ten to fifteen years, the social and global shifts which foster an environment conducive to such a pervasive phenomenon have been in formation for much longer. Robert Wuthnow gives a sociological interpretation out of extensive research related to spiritual journeys and spiritual practices in his book *After Heaven: Spirituality in America since the 1950s*. (1998). Wuthnow's finding is that since the 1950s, Americans have shifted in their expression of spirituality from a focus on dwelling to a focus on seeking. According to Wuthnow, in the past, people primarily identified their faith by membership in a church that had a specific location.   Because of social economic shifts, however, this general perception has changed somewhat. An example of this shift is that people produce less durable goods, and to a larger degree they produce a network of communication, or serve as brokers of goods or information. This shift from a focus on dwelling to a focus on seeking can also be seen in how people perceive institutions. The older pattern, according to Wuthnow (8), was tightly bounded and hierarchical. Institutions were literally the building blocks of society. The newer pattern, however, emphasizes looser connections, diversity, and negotiation; practical activity takes precedence over organizational positions. Sociologist Robert Putnam makes a similar observation in his seminal book *Bowling Alone* (2000). Putnam describes the social shift in the United States away from membership in social organizations and away from what he describes as physical capital.

This shift has produced confusion in measuring progress of success of institutions such as a local church. There have been several notable studies conducted which wrestle with the complexity of measuring church vitality in the U.S. Many popular studies have focused primarily on measuring Spiritual vitality in relation to church attendance. A prominent example of this is the Barna Group. Although Barna recognizes that the measurement of church vitality is changing, they primarily use measures of location (to use Wuthnow's term). The following is an example from an article of the Barna Group:

> With Americans pursuing a growing number of "church" options, some of the
> traditional measures of church health are being redefined. According to a new
> study released by The Barna Group, which has been studying church
> participation patterns since 1984, popular measures such as the percentage of
> people who are "unchurched" - based on attendance at a conventional church
> service - are out of date. Various new forms of faith community and
> experience, such as house churches, marketplace ministries and cyberchurches,

must be figured into the mix - and make calculating the percentage of Americans who can be counted as "unchurched" more complicated. The fact that millions of people are now involved in multiple faith communities - for instance, attending a conventional church one week, a house church the next, and interacting with an online faith community in-between - has rendered the standard measures of "churched" and "unchurched" much less precise.[1]

Although this article recognizes the same phenomenon of people moving away from spiritual identity based on location, studies like these which measure the decline in church membership and a lack of consistent attendance to events in the church building conclude that spirituality is declining in the United States. Putnam, however, indicates that the younger generation is not less engaged than their predecessors, but engaged in new ways (2000, 26). Similar to the proposal of Wuthnow, Putnam acknowledges the move away from dwelling, or physical capital, and toward seeking, or social capital. A similar argument is made by Wuthnow in his more recent book, *Boundless Faith* (2009), in which he disputes arguments of Jenkins (2007) and other common assumptions asserting that Christianity is flourishing in many parts of the world beyond the United States, and therefore, Christian churches in the U.S. are drawing inward, and are withdrawing their involvement with global activity. Wuthnow also disputes the assumption that local churches in the United States focus inwardly with little or no interest in their communities or the global context. Wuthnow's primary thesis in *Boundless Faith* is concomitant with the thesis of Putnam that instead of a move away from spirituality, there is a younger generation that is seeking new and different ways to express their faith. This new and different expression flows directly from the theories of spirituality moving from identification with location to an expression of seeking, which can be seen in the phenomenon of short-term missions as well as in the increase in niche tourism which focuses on a type of spiritual pilgrimage.

In literature related to spirituality, this duality of dwelling and seeking can be seen as a phenomenon that goes beyond contemporary social trends. Philip Sheldrake describes this duality of the spirituality in place and spirituality that is found in journey (1996) as he describes the early Celtic traditions before 700 which primarily describe a transitional faith between the fixed stable life and the more unstable life-styles of what he calls the holy wanderers. Perhaps the recent social shifts described by Putnam and Wuthnow help to explain the present fascination with Celtic Christianity. Sheldrake points out that many of the current perceptions of Celtic Christianity are not altogether accurate. However, the "myth" that has developed about Celtic Christianity resonates deeply with societal shifts away from a spirituality of place to a spirituality of journey. Celtic Christianity seems to embrace a more contextual, grounded, varied yet uncomplicated, messy, even chaotic faith and spirituality than the conventional, institutional forms (Sheldrake 1996, 3). According to Sheldrake, the importance of pilgrimage and journey in the Celtic tradition, balanced with a strong sense of place, are sentiments that are very much in

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[1] http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/18-congregations/45-new-statistics-on-church-attendance-and-avoidance   downloaded on Nov. 13, 2009.

tune with the experience and temper of our own age (1996, 3) and are perhaps a clue to the connection in STM to expressions of "finding reality" when people travel for short-term missions. Therefore, a physical journey that acts out an inner journey may be understood as one factor that differentiates this type of travel from many forms of modern tourism outside of what has been called niche tourism.

In the introduction of *Tourism: Between Place and Performance*, Coleman and Crang (2004) describe a form of moving away from location and toward discovery. Their focus is somewhat distinct from that of Wuthnow and Putnam, as they describe various modes of tourism. One particular mode that they describe draws from George Ritzer's foundational "McDonaldization Theory" (2008). This particular mode of tourism, according to Coleman and Crang, is about expanding the space of home rather than visiting the other (2008, 2). In this sense, they are moving toward a type of location, but in reality they may just be taking their own location on a trip. Reflective of many short-term missions trips, this form of tourism is associated with the McDonaldization of travel in which tourists seek out tourist space such as a McDonalds where they will find familiar surroundings and predictable food, those who bring food from home along with them, or those who chose to stay in tourist hotels which reflect their home surroundings. This form of tourism, according to Coleman and Crang, insulates tourists rather than allowing them to experience the culture of the location as they seek more of the same. A twist to this search for sameness is the search for an experience of others which is staged or which is in some way reflective of similarity. Goffman's theory of front and back regions (Hughes-Freeland 1998) describe how the front or that which is experienced by the tourist is the staged show, while the back regions contain the authentic experience. MacCannell (1976) argues that as people seek the authentic, the back stage is put on show and in the process authenticity is lost or threatened. An example of this in short-term missions are missionaries who receive requests from short-term mission teams who want to go and be a part of a Jesus Film showing or 'do evangelism'. Because these people donate money and want to see where their donations go, missionaries scurry to get a group of people from a local church who will set up the film in a park so that the visitors can have an 'authentic' experience. In this sense, the back stage had been moved to the front stage.

A second mode of tourism described by Coleman and Crang, which has linkage to short-term missions and which is contrasted with those who seek more of the same, is what they describe in terms of 'romantic' (as opposed to 'mass' which is used to describe those who seek sameness). This mode of tourism includes those who seek places carrying symbolic capital and are measured by the adventure, difficulty, cost, or exotic nature of the trip. Coleman and Crang point out that since this type of tourism is always just beyond the reach of tourists, it is driven by type of loss of authentic place (2004, 4). This understanding of a search for location can be found in tourism literature from the mid to early 1970's. Dean MacCannell (1976) is cited by Coleman and Craig as he noted tourism as an existential quest for 'authentic' experiences.

Brent Plate (2009) describes contemporary pilgrimages (which could be classified as niche tourism) to places such as the Trinity Atomic Test Site in New Mexico, the gravesite of Elvis Presley, and ground zero in New York, as places that people visit because a kind of sacred

power has been invested in the particular place. Plate argues that although some would call this just 'tourism' instead of 'real pilgrimages,' there are many similarities in the two and there is very little if any real distinction. According to Plate,

> …both are born from a desire to travel, to head into an unknown, foreign place where one might experience new sights and sounds and tastes and smells, and ultimately to be corporeally inspired by some transcendent locale. There is something about the quest itself, whether for noble, pious, pure, impure, or just plain curious reasons, that make the journey potentially transformative…pilgrimage is tightly bound to our sense of identity, and sometimes the best way to find ourselves is to get lost. (Plate 2009, 263)

The differences between tourism and pilgrimage, therefore. are not as clearly delineated as would appear, since contemporary tourism has aspects of pilgrimage. The distinction between pilgrimage and missions also present a challenge when considering short-term missions.

In the case of Celtic pilgrimage or other Christian pilgrimage, some would argue whether or not one would call this missions and whether the participants would be considered missionaries since the primary focus was spiritual, or ascetical (Sheldrade 1996, 67). Another way to state this is that the primary objective of pilgrimage is normally the person who is on the spiritual journey, as opposed to the focus of missions which is normally on the host location and the salvation of others. Sheldrake (1996,67) points out that some have described the Celtic Church as a mission church rather than a missionary one. The primary reason for this is the fact that the wandering ascetics did little explicit conversion work, but rather found a way to work out their own salvation as they journeyed.

Similar to the Celtic *peregrini* was the early Jesuits of the 15th century. John O'Malley (1993) gives an interesting perspective of how the early Jesuits, primarily between 1540 and 1590, viewed themselves and their purpose which in many ways is not unlike that of the Celtic Christians. Later Jesuits (after 1590) became intertwined in the political and social power struggles of the Roman Catholic Church. These Jesuits became identified with ministry of 'location' such as educational efforts that required them to remain in one place over a long period of time. The Jesuits of the 16th century (1540-1590), however, saw themselves primarily as pilgrims or apostles, who like Paul, moved from place to place with the urgency to spread the Gospel as they went. In these examples, the Celtic Christians were not unlike much of the contemporary short-term mission movement which does not focus primarily on evangelism, but rather on what earlier Christians would call works of piety.

One clarification is necessary at this point. The definitions of 'place' and 'journey' are broader than locations of a building or a trip. Popular understanding of historic pilgrimage is that it was primarily location-focused. However, in traditional understanding, Christian pilgrimage was always about *both* travel to a location (place) *and* inner transformation of the

pilgrim (seeking). The journey was both external *and* internal[2]. Although this has been the ideal in traditional pilgrimage, as well as current short-term missions, distortions of this ideal have moved pilgrimage to focus on location. The shift that I am describing and which is articulated by the sources that I am referencing is the shifting of pilgrimage to something other than a focus on 'place,' it is a movement toward community (social bonding capital) and authentic faith. This type of pilgrimage is often expressed in physical journeys, but the physical journey itself does not make it pilgrimage as I am describing.

Similar aspects of a focus away from location to a focus on journey or pilgrimage are evident in the writings of mission theology which build on an understanding of the missio Dei as the central identity of Christianity (Newbigin 1978, Bosch 1991, Guder 1998, Goheen 2000). These writings focus on a move away from an ecclesiology of location toward what Michael Goheen calls missionary ecclesiology.

In his book *The Open Secret*, Lesslie Newbigin develops a missionary ecclesiology out of a Trinitarian approach to missions. "Newbigin's approach to the theology of mission underwent a significant change of emphasis in the 1960's, particularly as a result of the WCC's New Delhi assembly in 1961" (Weston 2006, 81). Before this time, Newbigin (as well as most others) saw the Church as the primary 'agent' in the work of world mission, or to use Wuthnow and Putnam's term, 'location'. During the New Delhi assembly, however, Newbigin began to understand that a Trinitarian approach, which set the work of the trinity instead of the Church as the primary agent of mission, as an understanding that would do justice to what the Bible said related to God's Mission. This development can be seen in *The Open Secret,* in which Newbigin argues that "a Trinitarian approach to mission holds together three facets of the work of God in a dynamic and creative tension: the 'proclamation' of the Kingdom (in the authority of the Father), the 'presence' of the Kingdom (in and through the Son), and the 'prevenience' of the Kingdom (through the ministry of the Spirit who 'goes before' the Church in its missionary work)" (Newbigin 1978,72). This core Trinitarian understanding of mission is not particularly new in Newbigin. David Bosch builds on the ecclesiology of Karl Barth in a more explicit way than does Newbigin, and comes to many of the same conclusions, that mission is not an activity of the church, but rather the very nature of the Triune God reflected in the church (Bosch 1991, 373-380). Church and mission are interdependent elements in Bosch as well as Newbigin. This is clearly seen in the words of David Bosch: "It has become impossible to talk about the church without at the same time talking about mission. One can no longer talk about church *and* mission, only about the mission *of* the church…a church without mission or a mission without church are both contradictions." (1991, 372).

A trinitarian or missional hermeneutic points out that scripture does not particularly give a foundation for developing missions, but that the missio Dei is foundational for understanding all of scripture since mission is God's nature (Wright 2006).   In the New Testament, the Church sends apostles to people of varied ethnic groups. The church, however, did not limit mission to

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[2]   Doug Hardy, e-mail message to author, January 26, 2010.

sending missionaries to "the ends of the earth."As the body of Christ, which reflects Gods nature of mission, the Church didn't just have missionaries; the Church itself was the missionary in Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria, as well as to the ends of the earth. Another way to state this perspective is to say that the church is not just a sending church; rather it is a "sent" church (Guder 1998). The emphasis is not on church as "location," but rather on church as a people who are reflecting the missional nature of God.

Seminal work which describes this shift in postmodern culture was done by Paul Hiebert (1994) who described epistemological shifts in terms of bounded and centered sets. Heibert describes a bounded set as a grouping with well-defined bounds. A centered set groups things on the basis of how they relate to other things. For the sake of this study, a church that is defined by location could be defined in terms of a bounded set. The primary boundaries would be church membership and focus on identity with the location or structure. The societal as well as theological shift, however, that is defined not according to identity with location, but rather pilgrimage, could be defined in terms of what Heibert calls a centered set, since the church would be defined by its center, the Triune God of Scripture. The trouble with the former, writes Hiebert, is that this may become too exacting and exclusive, while an advantage of the latter is that Jesus Christ becomes the focus of all that the Church is and does.

Interestingly, this theological shift which defines the church in relation to the missio Dei instead of location is parallel with sociological movements in the U.S. which reflect a general movement of society toward meaning or reality that is discovered in pilgrimage, or to use Heiberts' term, a centered set. These are also parallels to the phenomenon of short-term missions which is a move away from a professionalization of missions in which mission activity is professionalized through structures and organizations which prepare, send and filter missionaries toward what Ralph Winter has called "re-amateurization of missions" similar to that of the Student Volunteer Movement (1996). Although there are similarities in short-term missions and the Student Volunteer Movement, I would argue that there is more dissimilarity which flows out of the socio-ecclesiological context, which has fostered short-term missions and which is quite different from the context out of which the Student Volunteer Movement emerged.

Although it is evident that the phenomenon of short-term missions has occurred within the atmosphere of social change, it is debatable whether or not this shift away from a focus on location to a focus on pilgrimage is a shift that is contrary to the essence of the Christian Church. Perhaps it could more safely be argued that it is unnatural for the church to focus primarily on location and consider mission as something that is above and beyond the normality of the church.

If it is within the nature of God and in turn, within the nature of the church to be translated from one context to another, this would indicate obstacles, as the Gospel is carried from societies that are perceived powerful. Some have stated that it is inevitable that movement from cultures which have been "colonializers" to other parts of the world be by nature oppressive and racist (Said 1978). In this understanding, Christianity would by nature be bound to location or would inevitably be colonialistic as they carry the gospel from one location to another.

Similar to the thesis of Edward Said is the work of anthropologist John Hutnyk (1996). In his book, *The Rumour of Calcutta: Tourism, Charity and the Poverty of Representations*, instead of exploring the people of Calcutta as a normal approach for anthropologists, his study is focused on those who visit Calcutta. There is a wealth of parallel theory and implications to short-term missions since Hutnyk focuses on people who travel to Calcutta on a budget, mostly from North America, Europe and Australia. Like short-term mission travelers, budget travelers (or backpack travelers) come not to bask in the glory of the Raj, but to explore the underbelly of Asia and to do some volunteer work in order to alleviate their guilt. Hutnyk explains that although these travelers have the best of motives, like short-term mission travelers, they do not question the way they frame their exposure to Calcutta. They frame or represent what they see based on what Hutnyk calls "the rumours of Calcutta". He states, "they have heard the 'rumour of Calcutta, the imagery by which the city is known. For them the city is already enframed" (Hutnyk 1996, 163). This framing is similar to Edward Said's argument that the colonializers often 'orientalize' the other based on 'the rumour'. In a similar vein is Robert Priest's article, *Missionary Positions: Christian, Modernist, Postmodernist* (Priest, 2001) which questions the 'rumour' related to the origins of term 'missionary position' as a means of orientalism or a way of enframing a 'rumoured' perception of missionaries. In the case of Calcutta, Hutnyk points out that budget travelers have a perception before they arrive (the rumour) which provides the framework by which they will experience the city. Similar to John Urry's (2002) perception of the 'tourist gaze', Hutnyk says that this 'enframing' leads to a problematic aspect in which third-world tourism participates in a voyeuristic consumption of poverty (1996, 11). This consumption by what Hutnyk calls budget travelers of backpack travelers, who are parallel to short-term mission travelers, includes photographs and souvenirs, but also entails 'good works,' experiences, and cultural capital. The ties between Hutnyk's work and short-term missions are unmistakable and disturbing. The interesting connection related to this study is that this class of tourists which Hutnyk describes are people who are critical of what he calls "modern lodge" tourists who are explicitly seeking their own comfort and a sense of similarity to their home. He also points out that these backpacking travelers are also in search for 'authentic experiences' (1996, 9), and a 'once in a lifetime experience,' which is often warped by 'enframing,' but which is similar to Wuthnow's and Putnam's theory of a search for authenticity.

Contrary to the theories of Said and Hutnyk, Lamin Sanneh defines a distinct position for Christianity as the gospel is carried from one culture to another. Sanneh defines the difference between what he calls mission by diffusion and mission by translation. Mission by diffusion is related to religion which expands from its initial cultural base and is implanted in other societies primarily as a matter of cultural identity. This would be consistent with the observations of Said and Hutnyk. Mission by translation, however, carries with it a deep theological vocation, which arises as an inevitable stage in the process of reception and adaptation. These two ways are not always easy to separate. "Mission by diffusion is unquestionably the stronger strand of Islam, whereas mission as translation is the vintage mark of Christianity" (Sanneh 1990, 29). A central theme for Sanneh is that "mission as translation makes the bold, fundamental assertion that the recipient culture is the authentic destination of God's salvific promise ...it is the missio Dei that allowed translation to enlarge the boundaries of the proclamation" (1990, 31). The understanding

of Sanneh is that Christianity is fundamentally not a faith of location, but rather is by nature a faith that finds its purpose as well as its identity beyond location.

In Paul D. Hanson's biblical theology, a common thread in the nature of the people of God is 'community.' An interesting concomitant to community found in Hanson's research is the theme of pilgrimage. Reflective of Paul Hieberts' centered sets in which we move toward a center, Hanson indicates that the person of faith remains a pilgrim in this world who looks yet "to the things that are unseen" (2 Cor. 4:18). And since that pilgrim shares with fellow believers, an important role in God's plan for the redemption of creation, Paul's eschatological paradox lies at the heart of his understanding of the community of faith (Hanson 2001, 444). In this sense, Hanson moves away from an individualistic approach to an apostolic calling and is indicating that the church is apostolic in nature, as it is called of God. Another key component of Hanson's thesis is the forward-looking, eschatological nature of a biblical community that leans forward toward the fullness of the Kingdom of God. The community of faith was thus a pilgrim community. It oriented its life toward God's future, as the people called to participate in the breaking of a divine order of Shalom (2001, 13). This emphasis on pilgrimage being an essential part of the Christian identity is found throughout Hanson's research as he states that, "the true community of faith is thus a pilgrim people, seeing its forms and structures as provisional within a world being transformed from brokenness to wholeness" (2001, 493).

Implications

I would like to return to the question that I asked in the introduction of this study related to the phenomenon of STM. "If short-term missions are too costly and seem to have very few actual benefits (and may even have adverse results); "why do so many people feel compelled to participate in short-term missions?"

There are a variety of answers to this question which go beyond short-term mission simply being a new and passing fad of the church, or a simply a well-marketed business.

The first indicator is the sociological ambience out of which short-term missions has emerged. Christianity (as well as other faiths) has historically expanded or adapted in movement with historical or sociological shifts. The expansion of Europe, which came into being through newly discovered navigation technology, and which resulted in each expanding nation to establish 'ownership' of new territories in varied ways (Seed) was also the ambience in which Christianity expanded.

Similar to the Celtic Christians whose pilgrimages focus on a spiritual benefit for themselves, short-term missions present a shift in missions giving and participation. Although the findings of Priest, Ver Beek, and others are that the benefits of short-term missions appear to be different from the "urban legends," and although findings in anthropological tourism studies, such as Hutnyk's, indicate that the orientalistic perceptions that people carry with them are often a type of consumerism of the poor. There are consistent findings that there is greater benefit for those who participate in going on a short-term mission trips than those who host short-term

mission teams. If this assumption is true, then it would appear that much of the motivation for continued short-term missions emerges from self-gratification, or even the capital that is gained from acts of charity.

Beyond the underlying sociological and even ethnocentric motivations behind short-term missions, I would argue that there is an element in which short-term missions as Christian pilgrimage is not only a natural expression of the missio Dei, but also provides a basis for missions that engages the whole church in the whole mission of God. A balanced aspect of the practice of short-term mission is found in Miriam Adeney's work (2003, 2006). Her aspect of the Shalom tourist is an expression of Christian pilgrimage that takes into account the respect and care needed for host locations of short-term missions. A difficult question was raised by Oscar Muriu, pastor of the Calvary Church in Nairobi, Kenya at a conference on short-term missions at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (July 2009). Muriu asked, "How does short-term missions follow the example of Christ, giving up power?" Continuing, Muriu stated that the problem is that we model mission only on the great commission – the "go and do passage" and don't take into consideration the Philippians 2 passage which states that Christ went—not because of resources that He had, but because of His humility. Jesus chose to be incarnate into poverty. In Matthew 10, Jesus gave the same call to His disciples. True Christian pilgrimage should be transformational for those who go, but should also reflect that their going is not an expression of their resources, but rather a reflection of their Christianity. Biblical references to 'pilgrim' are often in a context of loss, suffering, involuntary displacement, exclusion, and poverty. This is in sharp contrast to many contemporary notions of the short-termer as similar to the tourist with expendable income.

Perhaps the phrase 'short-term missions' is not the best description of this phenomenon. A major problem that has emerged in short-term missions is that people perceive their trip as a short-term participation in mission that begins when they board a plane and ends when they return home. In this sense, mission is strictly defined by location. Perhaps a better aspect of this phenomenon is to find ways to make short-term missions more than just a short project, but rather, a continuous way to live. I would argue that a good descriptor of that which is consistent with scripture and which is in harmony with much of the Christian tradition is that of pilgrimage, which is not defined by crossing bodies of water or by boarding a plane, but rather pilgrimage in the sense of a centered set in which the focus of the Christian pilgrim is Christ and His mission. Another way to describe this would be to use Lamin Sanneh's articulation of mission by translation. With this understanding, short-term mission trips become a pilgrimage which begins long before a person boards a plane and continues long after they return home. The activities of those who participate in short-term missions in this light are activities which are incarnational and partner with a long-term perspective of God's mission.

Whereas the reading for this study focused on describing the context which fosters the phenomenon of short-term mission, further research focusing on the relationships between pilgrimage and short-term missions connected with research related missionary ecclesiology could give a framework for constructive development of short-term mission practice in the future.

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