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A Writing Proving the Effectiveness of Short Term Missions

A Thesis Submitted To the Teacher and Students of

Advanced Apologetics

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Introduction

I was exposed to short-term Christian missions at a very young age, and it was not until recently that I learned that there was a dispute on the effectiveness of this form of missions, so I immediately wanted to do some research in order to try and learn more about the debate. As I thought back to my first mission trip, I recalled passing by a small park with a structure being built that was supposed to take the form of an elephant; it was unfinished but we were all enamoured by what we thought the structure would soon become. As my family and I passed by, we asked when the missionaries we were with when they thought the structure would be finished, and they informed us that it had been unfinished for years. Looking back on this event, I realized the similarity between this unfinished structure and the thought of short-term missions being ineffective: at the park we were told that missionaries often have ambitions with good intentions but do not have enough funding or time to leave what they feel is a lasting impact. Heading home, they felt better about themselves and the temporary work they had done, but the people they came to help are left disappointed and misunderstood. Having been on multiple short-term mission trips myself, I questioned whether my work was effective, so I pursued research and concluded that when short-term missions take in the needs of the people they go to serve, listen to them, study their culture, and go with a heart to serve rather than an agenda of “help,” short-term missions can be beneficial to the people served and the people serving. Missions is defined in *Webster's Dictionary* as “an important assignment carried out for political, religious, or commercial purposes, typically involving travel.”¹ In this paper missions shall be defined as a religious term—that is, missions are travels or inner workings that Christians do in

¹ John Gage Allee. *Webster's Dictionary*. Owings Mills, MD: Ottenheimer, 1997.

hopes of spreading the gospel and leading others to Christ. Many people try to argue that a certain type of Christian missions - described as “short-term”, meaning two months or less - are ineffective; upon exhaustive amounts of research, I find it undeniable that that argument is false and that short-term missions are extremely effective for both the person bringing the gospel as well as the person who is receiving the gospel.

Missions in the Bible

Missions in the Old Testament

While over time missions have changed greatly, the Old Testament is fundamentally the foundation of missions. Everything that God does and every person that God uses in the Old Testament are ways for Him to draw people towards the promise that he has for them and the hope that is only found in Him. The way Christian missions are portrayed in the Old Testament is much different than the way that missions is portrayed in the New Testament, or even in the world today. The good news in the Old Testament is God setting up a feast for believers and then prophesying to His people, Israel, of the great things that He is going to do. In the Old Testament, God makes multiple covenants with people in order to fulfill promises for entire nations, the first of these covenants being the Abrahamic Covenant; which is the covenant that God made with Abraham. The trajectory of this covenant is a route that begins with Abraham and then moves to all the families of the earth with a theme of blessings.² Abraham was called by God into missions in Genesis 12:1-3, which states, “Now the Lord said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”³ In simpler terms, “God promised to bless Abraham so that he and the nation that will come from him will be the means by which divine blessing will, in turn, be extended to the whole world.”⁴ Abraham had a strong relationship with

² Richard Bauckham. *Bible and Mission: Christian Witness in a Postmodern World*. Carlisle, UK: Paternoster Press, 2005.

³ Genesis 12:1-3

⁴ Rollin Gene Grams. *Bible and Mission: a Conversation between Biblical Studies and Missiology*. Schwarzenfeld, Germany: Neufeld Verlag, 2008.

God, and that is where his blessing flows from. In the same sense, the peoples of the world also need to be brought into a relationship with God in order for Abraham to share his blessing with them.⁵ According to Corneliu Constantineanu, “The covenant with Abraham both embodies God’s intention for the world and anticipates a universal application.”⁶ The overarching theme of God’s covenant with Abraham is blessing and the promise that all nations will be blessed is repeated four more times in Genesis alone.⁷ While God’s covenant with Abraham does promise to bless all the nations of the earth, those nations must be faithful to God and God alone. When God created humans, they sinned, and sin entered the world; therefore, the blessing that is seen in the Abrahamic covenant is not just a blessing of creation but it is also a blessing of salvation because sin will one day be defeated. “With sin God’s curse enters creation alongside God’s blessing.”⁸ Through the story of Israel, the curse continually accompanied the blessing but the goal of God’s promise to Abraham is that the blessing will prevail over the curse.⁹

The next covenant that the Old Testament mentions that can relate to missions is the Sinaitic, more commonly known as the Mosaic covenant, was a partial fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant.¹⁰ The focus of this covenant shifts from Israel to the nations, thereby revealing himself (God) to the world. The partial fulfillment of this covenant is seen in Exodus 19:5-6, which states, “Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.” These are the words that you shall speak to the

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

people of Israel.”¹¹ In Israel, the priest represented God to the people by interpreting and teaching the law and represented the people to God on their behalf by offering sacrifices;¹² this dual representation by Israel’s priests was again presented as a microcosm of the world, just as the relationship that was established with Israel was intended to serve as a pattern of God’s intended relationship with all of humanity.¹³

Much like the Sinaitic covenant, the Davidic covenant represents a partial fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant. The Davidic covenant follows a trajectory that moves from God’s enthronement of David to the ends of the earth, following the path of God’s rule and Kingdom coming into all of creation.¹⁴ In Psalm 72:17 the Davidic king inherits the promises that were made to Abraham; including the promise that is specifically stated in verse 17 which says, “May people be blessed in him, all nations call him blessed.”¹⁵ The structure of the Davidic covenant draws parallels with the Sinaitic covenant as well, “with the king playing a central role in holding back the moral, political and religious anarchy that would undermine Israel’s ministry to the world.”¹⁶ There is arguably not as much missions in the Old Testament in the sense of how missions has become in modern times, but that does not mean missions are a concept confined to the New Testament and the modern age. God did many things in the Old Testament to show his goodness and to have a book written for the people in the New Testament to look to when they are needing guidance in their missions. God finished setting up for the feast as the Old

¹¹ Exodus 19:5-6

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Richard Bauckham. *Bible and Mission: Christian Witness in a Postmodern World*. Carlisle, UK: Paternoster Press, 2005.

¹⁵ Psalm 72:17

¹⁶ Rollin Gene Grams. *Bible and Mission: a Conversation between Biblical Studies and Missiology*. Schwarzenfeld, Germany: Neufeld Verlag, 2008.

Testament came to an end and He began to fully prepare it for the coming of His son, Jesus Christ.

Missions in the New Testament

When reading the New Testament, it is evident through the life of Jesus and the apostles that missions were an extremely important, if not the most essential, part of their ministry. New Testament scholar Heinrich Kasting states: “Mission was, in the early stages, more than a mere function; it was a fundamental expression of the life of the church. The beginnings of a missionary theology are therefore also the beginnings of Christian theology as such.”¹⁷ Ben Meyer, another New Testament scholar, interprets this quote to mean: “Christianity had never been more itself, more consistent with Jesus and more evidently en route to its own future, than in the launching of the world mission.”¹⁸ Throughout the New Testament, missions is a constant theme. Because there are multiple authors in the New Testament, there never seems to be an exact or precise definition of missions, which suggests that the authors perhaps cared less about the definition of missions and more about the existence of missions in the readers.¹⁹ We as believers cannot look into missions today or discuss the changing of missions today unless we truly dive in and look at the missions that Jesus lived out during his time on earth.²⁰ In the New Testament God sent his son Jesus to be born on the earth in order for his metaphorical feast to be set; God brought the feast, and now the people were being called to join it. Jesus’ time on Earth was percisciely missions, seen in arguably the most common verse in the Bible, John 3:16, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish

¹⁷ David Jacobus Bosch. *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2011.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

but have eternal life.”²¹ This verse goes on and in verse seventeen states, “For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.”²² This is such a common verse that it can also be frequently looked over, even though the importance and meaning of this verse is the sole reason that God sent Jesus to the earth. Jesus spent much of his earthly ministry in a synagogue, where one day he stood up and was handed a scroll of the Prophet Isaiah to read, which said, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”²³ Jesus entered the synagogue and received a scroll from the Prophet Isaiah, which said, “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”²⁴ He closed the scroll and told the people, and Jesus said to them, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”²⁵ Jesus began healing people and living out His faith in God in order for people to see, believe who He was, and understand His purpose; though there was doubt of His claims to divinity, and not even His disciples fully understood His purpose, people were still drawn to His teachings and miracles. Jesus died on the cross so that we may be saved through Him, rose again, and He calls us as believers to share the gospel through the last words of his son. These words are seen in Acts 1:8 when Jesus says, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in Judea and

²¹ John 3:16

²² John 3:17

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Luke 4:18-19

²⁵ Ibid.

Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”²⁶ This verse is often quoted when people discuss missions because these words come from the mouth of Jesus Himself instructing us to spread His word both to those around us and to those all over the earth. Other than Jesus, the greatest example of missions in the New Testament can be seen through a man by the name of Paul, a ruthless and awful leader until the day God spoke to him and turned his life around. Paul then became one of the Church's greatest leaders and devoted his life to spreading the word of God with a goal of expanding the Kingdom of God. In 1 Corinthians 1:26b-29 God reveals the type of people that he plans on using in order for the gospel to be proclaimed across all the earth, saying, “Not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, so that no one may boast in the presence of God.”²⁷ Word Biblical commentary said that, “God isn’t saying that it is better to be foolish or uneducated. Rather, He is saying that the world’s wisdom and education does not bring us salvation in Jesus Christ. (Calvin states), ‘In putting the strong and wise and great to shame, God does not exalt the weak and uneducated and worthless, but brings all of them down to one common level.’”²⁸ God calls the lesser to lead those with higher social status because it is only when those on top humble themselves that they can truly long for God and reach for his presence in their lives. “At Corinth -- and Paul certainly does not mean only at Corinth — God singled out the poor and powerless, choosing to bring his work with them, not because God’s love does not extend to the cultural and social elite, but actually for the sake of

²⁶ Acts 1:8

²⁷ 1 Corinthians 1:26b-29

²⁸ “1 Corinthians Chapter 1.” Enduring Word, August 30, 2019.

the wealthy and the powerful as well as for the poor and the humble.”²⁹ In this passage Paul does something remarkable by first echoing the Old Testament and second by identifying a consistent divine strategy, a way in which God works.³⁰ The same God who chose the first Corinthian converts is the same God who chose the lowliest of all the people for his own.³¹ For example:

This is Hannah’s God, who exalts the lowly and humbles the exalted (1 Samuel 2:3-8), just as he is also Mary’s God, who fills up the hungry and dismisses the rich (Luke 1:51-53). This is the God who chose the youngest of Jesse’s sons, David, the one had even thought to summon (1 Samuel 16:6-13). This is the God who habitually overturns status, not in order to make the non-elite a new elite, but in order to abolish status, to establish his kingdom in which none can claim privilege over others and all gladly surrender privilege for the good of others.³²

This same theme can also be traced throughout Jesus’ ministry, for Jesus was constantly calling on the poor to lead the rich or the sinners to lead those who saw themselves as sinless. The New Testament mission is much more similar to the mission of the modern world for it is a call to action. The New Testament calls the believers in Matthew 4:4 to not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God. In the verses prior to Matthew 4:4, Jesus is being tempted by Satan to eat the food and according to the Word Biblical Commentary, “Jesus used the word of God as a weapon against Satan and temptation. He used a weapon that one can use when they are all alone. He used a weapon to defend His Sonship. He used a weapon to defeat temptation. He used a weapon that was effective because He understood it.”³³ This is what missions in the New Testament is all about, spreading the truth that comes from God and making it known all over the world.

²⁹ Richard, Bauckham. *Bible and Mission: Christian Witness in a Postmodern World*. Carlisle, UK: Paternoster Press, 2005.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ “Matthew Chapter 4.” Enduring Word, June 27, 2019.

The next area that embodies missions in the New Testament is Matthew 25, where Jesus gives two parables, one tells about ten bridegrooms, while each of the ten virgins had their own lamps and oil, it means that they had received the Word of God through the grace of the Holy Spirit. But like many who receive God's word and embraced it, they did not persevere and their oil burned out, just in time when the bridegroom arrived; the other tells about a master who was leaving his house to travel, and, before leaving, entrusted his property to his servants. According to the abilities of each man, one servant received five talents, the second had received two, and the third received only one. Both of these parables talk about, “a warning addressed specifically to those inside the professing church who are not to assume that their future is unconditionally assured; all ten are expecting to be at the feast, and until the moment comes, there is no apparent difference between them – it is the crisis which will divide the ready from the unready.”³⁴ The second parable emphasized the same idea but it just used a different story in order that the listeners may better understand exactly what Jesus was trying to get across. At the end of this chapter in verses 35-40 Matthew states,

For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' "Then the righteous will answer him, 'LORD, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'³⁵

The importance of this verse is seen in the way that Jesus portrays these words, for he iterates that anything that people on earth do for others they are also doing for Jesus. The whole core of Jesus' mission on earth is compassion, and he calls all of his people to strive and share

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Matthew 25:35-40

the same compassion with others. These verses are stating that while it is extremely important to be sharing the gospel to everyone, it is also almost meaningless if someone simply just preaches the gospel and leaves without having any compassion on the people. If missions is done that way, than according to the New Testament teachings it is not done correctly and there therefore was no point in that person going in the first place. Another verse that states a similar idea is James 1:27 which states, “Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.”³⁶

This verse is an example of what it means to be a doer of the Word of God and not just someone who speaks without putting their words into action. The Word Biblical Commentary on Matthew 4 states, “Your walk with God **is useless** if it does not translate into the way you live and the way you treat others. Many are deceived in their own heart regarding the reality of their walk with God.”³⁷ It is extremely important to note that this verse is not urging christians to remove themselves from the world; rather it is pointing christians toward living in the world and not of it—that is, living among unbelievers but not following the lifestyle of them. In the New Testament Jesus was living in the world and interacting with the world but was never living a life that was of the world, and that is how Christians should be living now and forever.

The last and arguably the most important part of missions in the New Testament is found in Mark 16:15-16; which is also known as the Great Commission. The words that Jesus spoke in this passage were His last words recorded before Jesus was taken up to heaven: “And he said to them, ‘Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.’”³⁸ It is quite

³⁶ James 1:27

³⁷ “James Chapter 1.” Enduring Word, August 26, 2018.

³⁸ Mark 16:15-16

interesting that the last words Jesus wanted to leave for the people on earth to remember were words that pointed the believers towards missions. According to Word Biblical Commentary on this verse, “This was a command, not a suggestion. Interest in missions is not an elective in God’s university of grace. It is something in which every disciple is expected to major.”³⁹ The New Testament version of missions is a much more clear and concise version of missions that should be looked at more often. Jesus’ whole goal on this earth was to spread the word of God across all nations, and that is made more clear as he leaves the earth instructing the disciples to do missions.

Throughout Jesus’ time on earth he constantly exemplifies what true missions should look like, for example, after Jesus preaches the Sermon on the Mount he feeds the five thousand; Jesus does not just preach the word and leave, rather he follows through and shows actions in order to back up his words. Missions is seen throughout the whole New Testament and throughout the life of Jesus Christ and as time goes on mission have progressed and changed in both good and not so good ways.

³⁹ “Mark Chapter 16.” Enduring Word, August 5, 2019.

Missions in the Dark Ages

During the Dark Ages, Ireland seemed to be a beacon of hope for the people of Europe and their missionary efforts arguably saved Christian Europe. While Europe was being invaded by barbarians and, metaphorically speaking, the lights of their churches were being burnt out, Ireland was able to keep learning scripture and keep the lights of their churches on.⁴⁰ According to J. Herbert Kane, “Had it not been for the monastic schools of Ireland, learning would almost have certainly perished from western Europe.”⁴¹ He then goes on to state that the missionary zeal was an outstanding characteristic of the Irish church and that during the sixth and seventh centuries it became one of the most amazing missionary churches of all time.⁴² The Irish had an extremely extensive knowledge of the Scriptures and had personally experienced the power of the Holy Spirit; with this its missionaries flung themselves head on into the battle against heathenism, which was threatening to engulf Christian Europe.⁴³ During this time they faced many hardships and persecutions, and despite all of that, they continued to enthusiastically evangelize to many foreign people.⁴⁴ Christianity then began to become widespread all throughout Scotland, due to the fact that a man by the name of Columba, who gave the first half of his life to the gospel ministry in his homeland where he founded many churches and monasteries, came into Scotland and established a monastery on an island called Iona.⁴⁵ This monastery was destined to become one of the greatest and most famous missionary centers of all time, Columba as well as his companions then started traveling throughout Scotland and the

⁴⁰ Herbert, J. Kane. *A Concise History of the Christian World Mission: a Panoramic View of Missions from Pentecost to the Present*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2001.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

offshore islands, evangelizing to the fishermen and peasants, teaching converts, as well as building and starting churches.⁴⁶ Columba died in 596, but the monastery that he established at Iona continued to send missionaries to all parts of the British Isles and Columbia for two hundred years. Though the largest obstacle that missionaries and churches faced during the Dark Ages was the invasion of the barbarians, the church struggled a lot during this time because their spectrum was quite slim: it ranged from a complete ignorance of the faith, the barbarians, and—on the other side—corrupted knowledge of the faith which ruined its foundation since people were denying Christ’s divine nature.⁴⁷ While the church was struggling with the multiple invasions of the barbarians at this time, the bigger issue was Muhammad, who claimed to be a prophet of the living God. Muhammad sent people out with a false sense of missions, telling them that they must conquer the four winds of heaven with much enthusiasm. With the rapid growth of the Muslim faith, Christian missions became much more difficult to accomplish; Stephen Neill writes in his book *A History of Christian Missions* about this rapid takeover.

Once the Arabs had begun to emerge from the fastness of their deserts, their progress was astonishingly rapid. By 650 the ancient empire of Persia had been destroyed. Jerusalem fell in 638, Caesarea in 640, and with them Palestine and Syria came under Muslim domination. In 642 Alexandria was captured; it was not long before the whole of Egypt was added to the Muslim domain. The advance westward along the coast of Africa continued, and in 697 Carthage was seized. By 715 the greater part of Spain was in Muslim hands.⁴⁸

The Muslim conquest was a dark time for Christianity, and while it was less violent than most people make it out to be, it was still a major disaster for the Christian world.⁴⁹ Stephen Neill states that “the ancient Eastern Churches lost their dominant position in government and in

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Bernard de. Vaulx. *History of the Missions: from the Beginning to Benedict XV (1914)*. London: Burns & Oates, 1961.

⁴⁸ Stephen Neill and Owen Chadwick. *A History of Christian Missions*. London: Penguin Books, 1991.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

the world of thought. They were constantly drained of their resources through the defection of so many of their young men. The Muslim sense of superiority naturally found itself reflected in a Christian sense of inferiority.”⁵⁰ The fact that these churches survived at all during such discouraging and troubling circumstances is a miracle; they continued their worship per usual with much courage.⁵¹ During the Dark Ages, Christianity was faced with many struggles and hardships, but if it had not been for these challenges, the religion as a whole might not have ever expanded to the state it is in today. The Christians of the time were forced to evangelize more and more in order for Christianity to continue on and have a chance of survival. During this time missions was extremely important because the whole goal of it was to lay the foundation of the Church and set up a path in order for later missionaries to carry out the calling God has for his people in regards to missions. The Christian Church did expand during the Dark ages but as they began to come to an end, Stephen Neill states,

The cities are depopulated, the monasteries ruined and burned, the country reduced to solitude... As the first men lived without law or fear of God, abandoned to their passions, so now every man does what seems good in his own eyes, despising laws human and divine and the commands of the Church. The strong oppress the weak; the world is full of violence against the poor and of the plunder of the goods of the Church... Men devour one another like the fishes in the sea.⁵²

While the Dark Age was a tragic time, there was a light at the end of the tunnel for Europe and they were beginning to prepare themselves for a great new age of Western Civilization and of the Western Church.⁵³

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

Middle Ages

Missions during Early European Expansion

The start of this period was more of a time of healing for the Christian Church from the traumatic events that had occurred previously in the Dark Ages. Their first task however was simply for Europe to extend Christianity throughout their own lands.

Scandinavia, for example, had lived for centuries in isolation from the world, and through this they had developed a very strange and different culture than anything else found around the world. The center of their culture was war; therefore, for centuries these northerners remained in their distant homelands fighting amongst themselves while trying to cause as little disturbance to those around them.⁵⁴ Then all of a sudden, something changed, and these people began to disperse and become a terror to the civilized world as well as the Christian world. Their violence spread from wide ranges, and the destruction they were willing to cause seemed to be limitless. The more settled people of Europe were so incredibly petrified by the complete savage destruction performed by these invaders that they seemed to neither hope for their conversion nor desire it very much, and so the process of converting and witnessing to the Scandinavian people was an extremely long process that came with many setbacks.

Denmark was the next European country that Europe hoped to witness too; luckily Denmark was much more closely in contact with Germany and, therefore, the Christian world as well. Due to this fact it was there in Denmark that Christianity made its first hopeful entry into this part of the world. Christianity took time to spread in Denmark due to this:

“We have seen that Anskar had been able to found a certain number of churches in Denmark. But the pressure of evangelization could not be maintained, and the life of the Church was fitful and uncertain. At the beginning of the tenth century a powerful king

⁵⁴ Ibid.

named Gorm decided to exclude Christianity completely from his kingdoms, and set himself to the familiar pastime of destroying churches and assassinating priests. His son and successor Harald Bluetooth swung in the other direction. He claimed to have ‘made the Danes Christians’, and it is in his days that we first hear of bishops among them (948). But it was only with the reign of Knut, familiar to all schoolchildren as the King Canute who pointed out his flattering courtiers that he could not prevent the tide from rising, that Christianity became an effective part of the life of the Danish people.”⁵⁵

According to studies, this man was raised as a Christian and, after a series of events that included the death of his brother, he was made the king of Denmark. The laws of the Christian world were the basis by which he made his laws, and the tradition that he established was almost a complete unity of Church and state. This brought about the first issues dealing with ecclesiastical orders and the state, and this became a problem not only in Denmark but in Norway as well. Norway spent many years under harsh control, but they finally got their way in 1152, when they began a hierarchy that was not subject to any other control than the improbable direction of the Pope. The Nordic island of Iceland, on the other hand, was far better off than Norway, for they had established their own vigorous and individual culture. Most might expect that in their isolation, they would not have produced the form of government that they did, but Iceland built up a society that was aristocratic, noble, impassioned, and, in a sense, democratic. Appropriately, Iceland was one of the only countries during this time in which Christianity was genuinely accepted by a democratic process. With Christianity being brought in to Iceland, there was fear of some conflict; therefore, the Icelanders went to the wisest men of the land and had them decide. After pondering long and hard, these wise men reported that this new religion, also known as Christianity, was good. Stephen Neill writes, “It might seem that this acceptance of Christianity was a rather calculating and lifeless thing. That it was more than this a real

⁵⁵ Ibid.

weighing of two different ways of life and a genuine acceptance of the higher --.”⁵⁶ Christianity was spreading slowly but surely throughout all of Europe, and the work of missions was beginning to pick up.

The Crusades in Europe were the first sign of recovery as well as a new capacity on the part of the European people beginning to work together not just as a whole, but as a Christian whole. This was not the only sign though, there were also signs in the fact that Christianity was pushing the Muslim faith out of Europe. The last Muslim stronghold was Granada, which fell around 1492, but from the middle of the 13th century Portugal had been wholly free and it was only a matter of time before Spain was as well. While the Muslims did leave behind traces of the effects of their time on and occupation of the Iberian Peninsula, Spain and Portugal were to be Christian countries again.⁵⁷ Some Christians during this time believed that the only way a Saracen (Muslim or Arab) could be good was if they were dead, while others believed that through a clear and faithful preaching of the Gospel even the Saracens could be saved. A man who held such a strong belief in the latter was Ramon Lull, one of the greatest missionaries in the history of the Church.⁵⁸ Many others were filled with an equal desire to spread and share the Gospel to those who did not believe and, if necessary, they were willing to suffer for it, but it was left to Lull to be the first to develop a theory of missions and how it should be properly done. Lull wanted to evangelize to all people and he believed that in order to successfully evangelize to someone one must have a comprehensive and accurate understanding of the other’s language. His second requirement for missions was more aimed towards evangelizing to the Muslim faith; he said that the composition of a book where the truth of the Christian religion

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

should be demonstrated by necessary reasons. The reasoning behind this requirement was based upon a conversation he had with Grand Mufti of Bugia in Tunis, where he challenged Lull, saying, “If you hold that the law of Christ is true and that of Muhammed false, you must prove it by necessary reason.”⁵⁹ The third of these requirements was that one must be willing to be a faithful and courageous witness among the Saracens even if the cost of that is death.⁶⁰ Lull writes, “Missionaries will convert the world by preaching, but also through the shedding of tears and blood and with great labour, and through a bitter death.”⁶¹ Lull was not a man to speak and not act; he paid four visits to North Africa in order to preach to the Muslims and to debate with them in person, and on his fourth visit to Bugia in 1315 he was handled so roughly that he died of his injuries.⁶² Lull began a great work for the peoples in Europe to be able to look to and follow, and after his death Christianity began to spread as more people began to go into areas such as North Africa and try to reason with those of the Muslim faith. Near the end of this time period, more areas of the earth began to be discovered and as a result, Christianity became a world-wide religion and no longer simply just a primarily Mediterranean religion.

Mission in the Age of Discovery

In 1492 Christopher Columbus crossed the Atlantic ocean and discovered new land, unlocking a new world for Western Exploration to take place. This opened up a plethora of views to both the European minds and the Christian Church. The colonial period, perhaps rather incongruously, produced an unparalleled era of missions due to the fact that Christendom shockingly discovered that, after fifteen centuries of the founding of the Christian church, there

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

were still millions of people who knew nothing about salvation and had yet to be baptized.⁶³

Colonialism and missions, though people argued that they were independent of one another, were actually dependent on one another; the right to have colonies came with the duty to Christianize the colony. According to David J. Bosch, “This right to “send” ecclesiastical agents to distant colonies was so decisive that the activities and designation of the envoys were to derive their names from this action; their assignment came to be called “mission” (a term first used in this sense by Ignatius of Loyola), and they called themselves ‘missionaries’.”⁶⁴ Thus far, the word missions has been used in this writing as if it had already been an established word defining the activity of “proclaiming and embodying the gospel among those who had not yet embraced it,” but the use of this term did not come around until fifteen centuries after the founding of the Christian church.⁶⁵ In earlier years, missions had been defined with the use of words such as ‘propagation of the faith,’ ‘preaching of the gospel,’ ‘apostolic proclamation,’ ‘planting the church,’ and ‘illuminating the nations.’⁶⁶ The church during this time was understood as a legal institution that had the right to entrust its “mission” to secular powers and to a group of specialists also known as priests.⁶⁷ The meaning of mission meant that the activities of the Western ecclesiastical system was extended into the rest of the world.⁶⁸ “The ‘missionary’ was irrevocably tied to an institution in Europe, from which he or she derived the irrevocable tie to an institution in Europe, from which he or she derived the mandate and power

⁶³ David Jacobus, Bosch. *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2011.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

to confer salvation on those who accept certain tenets of the faith.”⁶⁹ During this time people were not simply becoming missionaries on the basis of their ecclesiastical status but more based on a calling or urge that one felt from the Holy Spirit. Missions were established during the Age of Discovery, therefore allowing for its growth to occur in the years to come and for more people to hear about Jesus.

The Roman Catholic Missions

The picture of the history of missions that has been painted thus far has not exactly been a pleasant one but ultimately the Christian church has prevailed as well as expanded. The Christians during this time responded in the best way they knew how to; they managed to explain the gospel in a way that would make the most sense to the minds of the Europeans. David J. Bosch states, “In similar manner the missionary wars, direct or indirect, and the entire project of Western Colonization of the rest of the world were—in spite of all the horrors that went with them and even if we, today, find them totally incomprehensible and indefensible—expressions of a genuine concern for others as Christians understood their responsibility in those years.”⁷⁰

The Roman Catholic mission differed from the Greeks in a sense that the Greeks based their missionary practices on John 3:16 while the Roman Catholics more commonly used Luke 14:23. In Luke 14:23, it reads “And the master said to the servant, ‘Go out to the highways and hedges and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled.’”⁷¹ During this time most people translated this text to mean that the Christian faith was a forced religion; this verse actually stated the contrary. The use of the word compel gave people reason to believe that there was force being used, while in actuality the word compel meant to persuade; using this latter

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Luke 14:23

definition, no one held the Indians at gun-point trying to force them to follow Christ but rather they followed this definition in hopes that this would persuade them to embrace the faith.⁷² In more recent centuries the use of this verse has declined in the missionary world due to the confusion that it causes, but the meaning behind is still extremely prevalent. Throughout most of the previously-mentioned history of missions, the church had been extremely belittled and oppressed, but in the middle ages one begins to see a change that, as David J. Bosch states,

“In the period under discussion in this chapter, the church underwent a series of large profound changes. It moved from being a small, persecuted minority to being a large and influential organization; it changed from harassed sect to oppression of sects; every link between Christianity and Judaism was served; an intimate relationship between throne and altar evolved; membership of the church became a matter of course; the office of the believer was largely forgotten; the dogma was conclusively fixed and finalized; the Church had adjusted to the long postponement of Christ’s return; the apocalyptic missionary movement of the primitive church gave way to the expansion of Christendom.”⁷³

Clearly, the Church transitioned from being the oppressed to being the oppressor without seeming to feel much remorse about it whatsoever. The people began to try and turn the empire into one that was solely based on Christianity and its principles; they began to try and run the way that people lived by requiring—and, therefore, forcing—each Catholic Church to internalize and carry out the Council’s explicit theological, pastoral, and missionary demands. At the end of this time period, the Church had broken and missions were failing, even though there were missionaries spread out all across the world; for example, missions in Asia were failing because they depended largely on the favour of the local rulers. Due to this, Japanese Christianity was almost completely demolished by persecution, and similar experiences began to occur in other parts of the world as well. Much of the disasters in Christian missions during this time period

⁷²David Jacobus, Bosch. *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2011.

⁷³ Ibid.

evolved from the tension and separation between the Jesuits, Franciscans, and Romans. Each group had its failures as well as successes; Stephen Neill states in his novel, *A History of Christian Missions*, that

“In this period, in which the missionary work of the Church had run into grave difficulties, a final blow was struck by the dissolution of the Jesuit Order. From the beginning, as we have seen, both secular clergy and religious Orders had been hostile to the Jesuits. Complaints of their arrogance, their improper missionary methods, their interference in political affairs, and the vast wealth accumulated through their commercial speculations, had been endless. Rome waited long, but in the end decided to strike. On 21 July 1773, in the Brief *Dominus ac Redemptor*, Pope Clement XIV dissolved the Society of Jesus, sequestered all its property, and declared that no pope in the future should ever recall it into being. At that time the Society numbered 22,589 members, of whom 11,293 were priests. As a result of the dissolution at least 3,000 missionaries were withdrawn from their fields. A certain number of those gave up their name of Jesuit and remained at their posts; the great majority were given no choice - they were put on board ship like cattle and carried off to their country of origin. They were literally irreplaceable; the Pope had condemned Roman Catholic missions to temporary eclipse.⁷⁴”

This time period ended with much downfall; for example, the Roman Catholic Church was internally weakened by the controversial debates over Jansenism, a theological movement primarily in France that emphasized original sin, human depravity, the necessity of divine grace and predestination.⁷⁵ Neither the Jesuits, also known as the members of the Roman Catholic Church, nor the Jansenists could truly claim victory during this time; even still, the inner weakness that the Churches of Europe were facing caused them to be unable to meet the high demands that missions were in need of for both reinforcement and support. If only the different types of religious groups had not fought so much over who ran the land and focused more on spreading the gospel, then things could have been much better for missionaries during this time. Missions as well as the Christian religion were not always successful throughout history and they

⁷⁴ Stephen Neill, and Owen Chadwick. *A History of Christian Missions*. London: Penguin Books, 1991.

⁷⁵ The Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica. “Jansenism.” Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., May 16, 2019.

still fail today, but this world is fallen and the mistakes made during this time helped point the missionaries in the future closer to Christ.

New Age

Mission in the Protestant Reformation

In the light of the Protestant Reformation, a man by the name of Martin Luther, spoke out and began to challenge the ideals of the Catholic church, which had begun to tell people that in order to get into heaven, someone living must pay what is known as indulgences:

“In the Roman Catholic Church, an indulgence is the remission of a temporal punishment brought about by sin. This punishment consists of either earthly sufferings or time spent after death in Purgatory. Typically a writ of indulgence is issued by the Church and given to an individual who has demonstrated some type of penance, or good work. Indulgences can be applied to oneself or to the soul of a deceased person. Not everyone agrees on the technicalities surrounding indulgences or on the theology behind them. For this reason, the term is somewhat ambiguous and subject to much confusion. In the Catholic tradition, there are two types of indulgences: partial indulgences and plenary indulgences. A partial indulgence removes part of one's punishment or suffering, while a plenary indulgence removes all of one's punishment or suffering. Historically, indulgences have been linked to earning time out of Purgatory. The abuse of indulgences was a primary cause of the Protestant Reformation in the early sixteenth century.”⁷⁶

People were therefore spending every last penny that they owned in order to try to save themselves and Luther was highly disturbed by this, so he investigated, studied, and eventually he proved the Catholic Church wrong. Luther applied Romans 1:16 to his writings and proofs, a verse that describes the gospel as “the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes.”⁷⁷ The entirety of this verse along with verse seventeen states, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: ‘The righteous will live by faith.’”⁷⁸ It would not

⁷⁶ Study.com. Study.com. Accessed December 9, 2019.
<https://study.com/academy/lesson/catholic-indulgences-definition-history-quiz.html>.

⁷⁷ David Jacobus, Bosch. *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2011.

⁷⁸ Romans 1:16-17

be fair or right to reduce the entirety of Luther's theology to this philosophy or finding, but it was arguably the cornerstone and foundation of the rest of his theology. Bosch describes the way that he believed Luther felt about this verse by saying, "He could never again stop marvelling at the fact that God had accepted him, poor and wretched human being that he was, mercifully and gratuitously."⁷⁹ Scholars claim beyond dispute that the Protestant Reformation's development of the article of *justification by faith* is the starting point for theology. The doctrine of justification became the one on which all other doctrines hinged, and it proclaimed that the starting point of the Reformers was not what anyone could and should do for their salvation but rather what God had already done in Christ for the world. Another common misconception that people believed during this time was that everyone was seen from the perspective of the fall; that is, everyone was lost and unable to do anything about their condition. The protestantism ideals taught that people had to be aware of their lostness so that they could be brought to repentance and released from their heavy load of sin, whereas Catholicism during this time concentrated on the many sins of individuals.⁸⁰ Protestants emphasized a singular sin and the essential sinfulness of humanity as a whole; Catholicism focused on the plural sins of individuals. During the Reformation, Luther worked to stress the *subjective dimension of salvation*, which went against the theology of Thomas Aquinas whose theology was *scientia argumentativa* ("reasoned science").⁸¹ Luther saw Aquinas' approach as impossible: God should no longer be considered God in himself (*Gott an sich*); he was the God for me, for us, and the God who, for the sake of Christ had justified us by grace.⁸² This is what Luther began to teach and show to people in

⁷⁹ David Jacobus, Bosch. *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2011.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.

hopes that their perspective would shift from the lies and fallacies that the catholic church had been teaching them - to the correct way that they should have been seeing Jesus. Luther brought about another new idea, that as believers, people should be standing in direct relationship with God, a relationship that exists between the believer and God and is separated from the church. The ideas that Luther introduced were ideas that have since then become an essential part of the Christian faith. Scholars argue that the ideas that Luther introduced could have both a positive and negative effect on missions in multiple different ways. The reformers were not involved or very interested in the spreading of the gospel and, unfortunately, these people showed no lament about their inability to go out into the world. The scholar “Schick believes that a fundamental affirmation of the missionary duty of the church was simply absent in the Reformers.”⁸³

Scholars have two differing views on this topic; some believe that what Schick said is true while others, more recently, have taken a different perspective on Schick’s ideal. For example,

“Several scholars have argued that a judgment of such as Warneck’s implies summoning the Reformers before the tribunal of the modern missionary movement and finding them guilty for not having subscribed to a definition of mission which did not even exist in their own time. The assumption here is that the “great missionary century” (the nineteenth) had a correct understanding of mission; this definition is imposed on the Reformers, who then have to be judged guilty for not having subscribed to it.”⁸⁴

The problem that arises here is that the new idea of missions is often conceived as the ability of someone to go overseas and spread the word, but that is simply not the case; therefore, to argue that the reformers did not have any missionary vision, certain scholars contend that making such a claim is to misunderstand the basic thrust of their ministry and theology. Luther arguably could even be regarded as “a creative and original missionary thinker,” for Luther provided new and right ideas for the church to be able to go out and spread a much more

⁸³ Ibid

⁸⁴ Ibid.

uplifting way of thinking opposed to the conditional terms that the Catholic church was spreading. Luther believed strongly in the idea that works do not get oneself into heaven, but he also notes that “if there be no works, there must be something amiss with faith.”⁸⁵ One could argue that one of the most profound missionary statements that Luther made was this: “If a Christian should find himself or herself in a place where there are no other Christians, ‘he would be under the obligation to preach and teach the gospel to the erring pagans or non-Christians because of the duty of brotherly love, even if no human being had called him to do this.’”⁸⁶ While Luther unarguably changed the church as well as the missionary paradigm of this time, in the two centuries following, little happened by way of missionary outreach; the Reformers faced many obstacles during this time, the biggest being that there was not much time to be evangelizing because they were working so hard to reform the church. This does not necessarily give them an excuse to not be spreading the gospel as frequently as they should have been, but missions were still very much happening, as seen in Luther’s exceptional work in reforming the church.

Missions in the Wake of the Enlightenment

During the Enlightenment there was a large shift from people deriving their existence and validity from below and no longer above. The Enlightenment unarguably provided people with a new “plausibility structure” that no other faith, including the Christian faith, had provided before. The Christian faith along with all other faith’s, no longer functioned directly informing scientific thinking.⁸⁷ The Christian faith was obviously still practiced following the discoveries and events of the Enlightenment period, but it lost its quiet self-evidence; the Christian faith became

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

strained and apted to overemphasize itself, for Christianity felt that it was operating in a hostile and even alien world.⁸⁸ During the Enlightenment period, the word religion expanded and no longer stood solely for “devoutness” or “piety” in the Christian faith; it now could also be used in a plural sense, and, consequently, the Christian faith became just one among several other “religions.” Inevitably, the Enlightenment had a large and profound influence on Christian missions in multiple different ways; before one looks into that, one must recognize that though the first Great Awakening did not directly birth the missionary activities, it did lay the foundations for them. The first Awakening ran out of steam in America where only about five percent of the population in this new nation were avid church members. Bosch states,

“All this was soon to change, dramatically and fundamentally. Methodist, Baptist, and Presbyterian churches began to experience marked growth in the wake of the American Revolution (Chaney 1977:20-24). By the year 1800 the percentage of church membership had almost doubled; it has steadily increased ever since then, reaching a peak of about sixty percent in 1970 (Hogg 1977:361). The dramatic rise after 1776 is to be attributed almost solely to the Second Great Awakening. It was, unlike the first Awakening, not a new beginning for North America (as it was, to an extent, for Britain); rather, it could profit substantially from the first Awakening, refer back to it, learn from its failures, and shortcomings, consolidate its gains, and channel the unprecedented effusion of newly released energy into a great variety of ministries, particularly domestic and foreign missions.”⁸⁹

All of this goes to state that although the Enlightenment caused a collapse in the mission world, God was still at work in other great ways, such as the Second Great Awakening. Christians had a new mood at this time, a mood that spawned a missionary spirit that by 1817 pushed the missionary cause to become the great passion of the American churches. During the time of the Evangelical Awakening, one of the most significant products in both North America and Britain as well as other places, was the specific founding of certain societies that were

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

devoted solely to foreign missions. The word that these people began to build upon was “voluntarism”, for those people who were greatly touched by the awakening were not willing to sit back and wait for the official churches to take initiative; rather these people banded together, from all different churches, for the sake of the world mission.⁹⁰ During this time, the churches had little interest in the predicament of the poor in their own countries or the detrimental effect of colonial policies on the people. The people touched by the Awakenings and had compassion toward the people who were exposed to degrading conditions in slums and prisons. Similar to the first, the Second Great Awakening also ran out of steam after a certain amount of time; Charles G. Finney simply stated that awakenings are not destined to last—they all run out of steam and need to be rejuvenated. Finney also stated that “Awakenings—or “revivals,” as they increasingly came to be called—were becoming routine. They deteriorated into a technique for maintaining Christian America.”⁹¹ During the nineteenth century in the United States, Christianity was very much an establishment religion; slavery, oppression, and war had begun to die down, while unheard of technological advances began to rise. Gradually, mainline theologians began to leave behind many of the ideas of the dramatically supernatural aspects of the traditional postmillennial view of history. According to Bosch, “The idea of history as a cosmic struggle between God and Satan was discarded, as was the belief in the physical return of Christ. The Kingdom was not future or other-worldly, but “here and now”; it was, in fact, already taking shape in the dramatic technical advances of North America.”⁹² There were two views around at this time concerning where nonbelievers would spend their eternal life; on the one hand, people no longer believed that if one was untouched by the gospel they would go

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

straight to hell, but on the other hand, it was becoming a more popular thought that the overseas mission of the American churches consisted in sharing the luxuries of the American civilization and way of life with the less fortunate people of the world.⁹³ During this time period the theme of love became a very ambivalent one for their missions; it was brought about by Johannes van den Berg who chose the words, “Constrained by Jesus’ Love?”⁹⁴ from 2 Corinthians 5:14 as the great title of his exceptional inquiry into the motives of the missionary awakening in Great Britain. This theme had many positive contributions to missions, for example,

“In the missionary awakening love became a powerful incentive - love as gratitude for God’s love in Christ and as devotion to him who “so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son”. This love, together with the desire to promote the “spiritual benefit of others” gradually became the dominant motif (cf van den Berg 1956:98-102, 156-159, 172-176; Warren 1965:52f). There was, among the Christians touched by the Awakening, a tremendous sense of gratitude for what they had received and an urgent desire to share with others, both at home and abroad, the blessings so freely shed upon them.”⁹⁵

Missions were beginning to shape into the missions that that the world sees and uses today; a mission that is based on love and caring for people in a way that one works to put others before themselves. A love for Christ typically manifests itself in an extraordinary level of commitment and dedication; that is what is seen during this time period, the love that people had for Christ encouraged them to go out and spread that love to others. Throughout the centuries it was a common trend for each period to justify their missionary intents with Scripture; the Enlightenment period was a little different, however, for missions were much more diverse and multifaceted during this period than ever before. Therefore, it is virtually impossible to pinpoint one specific verse to as the theme of this period of missions; there were multiple different

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ 2 Corinthians 5:14

⁹⁵ David Jacobus, Bosch. *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2011.

Biblical justifications. While missions made a lot of great advances during this time period, it was also impacting the world in some negative aspects. For example Christians from the west began to think of themselves as better than those from third-world countries, and, consequently, they referred to these “less fortunate” as minorities. Missionary circles in the west reacted rather negatively to the Enlightenment, but in spite of that, there can be no doubt that this movement unleashed a large amount of Christian energy that was partially channelled into overseas missionary efforts.⁹⁶ It is clear that much of the nineteenth and twentieth century versions of missions did not exceedingly pursue the theme Paul stated of being “constrained by Jesus’ love,” but they still had a great impact on the world of missions and the goal of spreading the gospel to the ends of the earth.

Missions in the 21st Century

Missions in the 21st century would best be described from a Great Commission standpoint. the Great Commission comes from the book of Matthew in chapter 28 verses 18-20: “Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”⁹⁷ Studies show that a third of the world’s people refer to themselves as Christians, and Christianity has become the world’s most global faith: there are followers of Jesus present to the ends of the earth. There are countries all over the world who are beginning to respond to Christianity in small but significant ways, likely a defiance of the social norms of religion in their country and a factor that puts these people at a

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Matthew 28:18-20

major risk of facing persecution. The 21st century has been a time of growth for the world of Christianity, for,

“Middle East Media reports surging interest in Christian literature. Meanwhile, in Indonesia - a scene of organized Muslim attacks against Christians since 1998 - the overall church may have grown to 20 million people, far above the official estimate of 13 to 15 million. Latin America’s active evangelical contingent now numbers about 60 million people, two-thirds of whom are Pentecostals able to reach the region’s poor and disenfranchised masses. Latin evangelicals are taking their missions responsibilities seriously, too. Latins are particularly eager to win Muslims to Christ and are training to do so ever more effectively. Meanwhile, early in the 1990s, the Quechua people of Bolivia were said to be largely unreached with the gospel. Today the evangelical movement among them numbers more than 50,000. A decade ago the Bellavista prison in Columbia was one of the most violent and dehumanizing places on earth. Today, amid a continuing revival, it is the site of a Bible school.”⁹⁸

The examples stated above are just a few of the incredible changes that have happened during the 21st century due to the avid mission work of the people in this period. The global mission is nowhere near perfect—it never will be—but it is in a place where Christianity is a thriving religion. It is important to note that with all the technological advances of this time period also comes a change in the way some missionaries work and, in a sense, has made spreading the gospel easier. There are now audio Bibles for the blind or illiterate to listen to, and Bibles are being translated into different languages all around the world, causing Christianity to grow rapidly. The largest struggle with the Church today is arguably ethics; the world is full of multiple different ethical disputes such as abortion, gay marriage, and the legalization of marijuana, and the Churches are being looked at to choose a side. The Church has been forced to grow due to these challenges, and a result from this growth is the most recent, rapidly growing version of missions: the idea of short-term mission trips. A short-term mission is one of three weeks or less, and many people today argue that this form of missions is ineffective; however,

⁹⁸ Stan Guthrie and Jon Bonk. *Missions in the Third Millennium: 21 Key Trends for the 21st Century*. Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2011.

without short-term missions, long term missions would most likely not be able to perform to the best of their ability. In the 21st century, short-term missions is a large way that long term missionaries get their funding; furthermore, this form of missions is a large way that God reveals to people His calling of them into ministry.

Thesis Proof

Introduce Short-Term Missions

Christian missions is best defined as an organized effort to spread Christianity to unreached people. Short-term missions, on the other hand, does not have a precise consensus on the definition of short. According to Brian M. Howell, “Many STM (short-term mission) trips today are designed to fit into windows of time North Americans (particularly U.S. Americans) have for vacation travel. For working adults this typically means a maximum of two weeks. For college and High School students, the time may be longer, but it is likely to fit into a summer break.”⁹⁹ Some scholars argue that a short-term mission is defined by the length of time while others define it by the cultural and social location of the traveler rather than the trip itself. It is important to note that there will most likely never be an agreement on the perfect definition of short-term missions, though working to define it is still important. For the purpose of this thesis, short-term missions are defined as Christian missions that are shorter than a month, do not require any form of specific training, and is a task that anyone with a passion for evangelism can take on. In today’s generation, short-term mission trips have gained a negative reputation, as the obvious question is: “Is only going for a week any help at all?” To which the answer is a resounding *yes!* Not everyone is called to be a missionary, but opening up the opportunity to be able to go for a week and serve is still living out what the Lord has called Christians to do in the Great Commission.

The Great Commission is one of the most significant passages in the Bible. First, it is the last recorded personal instruction given to his disciples by Jesus; second, it is a special calling

⁹⁹ Brian M. Howell. *Short-Term Mission: an Ethnography of Christian Travel Narrative and Experience*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012.

from Jesus Christ to all His followers to take specific action while on this earth.¹⁰⁰ The Great Commission is found in the Gospel of Matthew: “Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age’” (Matthew 28:18-20).¹⁰¹ This is how Christians have been called to live: they have been called to carry out Jesus’ ministry here on earth by striving to expand the Kingdom of God. Often, visiting a poverty-stricken place truly benefits the heart of the person going and can positively affect how he/she serves in the area he/she lives. Americans are generally blinded by their easy, freedom-filled lifestyles; therefore, traveling to a developing country often serves as a reality check and can change the heart of the person going. Another factor to consider is the impact of the experience on the person himself/herself: how would a person know he/she wanted to be a long term missionary if he/she never had the experience of a short-term mission trip? The Lord can work and call people through these trips; while he does not exclusively call people in this way, it is definitely an eye opening experience. In Romans 1:12 Paul says, “that is that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith.” In a lot of mission trips, the Christian thinks they will be pouring themselves out for the people when, in reality, the people pour into the life of the Christian as well; this is, as Paul perfectly puts it, mutual encouragement. There is an obscure line drawn concerning the question of where a short-term mission trip is beneficial and where or when it starts to hurt the people being

¹⁰⁰ Greg. “The Great Commission.” AllAboutJesusChrist.org. All About Jesus Christ, May 22, 2019.

¹⁰¹ Matthew 28:18-20

ministered to. Statistics have shown a positive impact when Christians come in and help a country, as shown by Matthew Parris, an acclaimed atheist:

“Before Christmas I returned, after 45 years, to the country that as a boy I knew as Nyasaland. Today it's Malawi, and The Times Christmas Appeal includes a small British charity working there. Pump Aid helps rural communities to install a simple pump, letting people keep their village wells sealed and clean. I went to see this work. It inspired me, renewing my flagging faith in development charities. But travelling in Malawi refreshed another belief, too: one I've been trying to banish all my life, but an observation I've been unable to avoid since my African childhood. It confounds my ideological beliefs, stubbornly refuses to fit my world view, and has embarrassed my growing belief that there is no God. Now a confirmed atheist, I've become convinced of the enormous contribution that Christian evangelism makes in Africa: sharply distinct from the work of secular NGOs, government projects and international aid efforts. These alone will not do. Education and training alone will not do. In Africa Christianity changes people's hearts. It brings a spiritual transformation. The rebirth is real. The change is good. I used to avoid this truth by applauding—as you can—the practical work of mission churches in Africa. It's a pity, I would say, that salvation is part of the package, but Christians black and white, working in Africa, do heal the sick, do teach people to read and write; and only the severest kind of secularist could see a mission hospital or school and say the world would be better without it..”¹⁰²

It was obvious to him that Christianity, faith, and hope all have a significant and positive impact on a country. Having different Christians frequently arrive and leave a mission field can be hard on the people in these fields and represent a false love, but short-term mission trips can help with small projects while simultaneously creating first-world and third-world interactions. In the end, the light of Jesus is being shared with those who do not know the Lord, and the actions of the Christian should be evident of the Lord's love through the time spent in the country, even if it is a short time.

One of the most effective parts of a short-term mission trip is the support of the long term missionaries who have left the comfort of their homes to invest in a different culture and people

¹⁰² Matthew Parris. “As an Atheist, I Truly Believe Africa Needs God.” The Times. The Times, December 27, 2008.

group; having Christians come and provide company and encouragement is extremely important. Not everyone is called to be a long-term missionary in a third-world country, but everyone should be given the opportunity to serve in a third-world country. It is life changing and shakes the heart up; to some extent, most, if not, all humans experience a sense of sympathy toward those who are at a lower state of life or emotion than they are. This is virtually always the case for a missionary going to a third-world country, and so he/she feels this sympathy, which can then develop into compassion and a desire to actively increase the state of life of the third-world foreigners. Whenever Jesus saw someone in this "lower state of life," He had compassion and was moved to help them. Likewise, through short-term missions people can be "moved with compassion" to serve frequently. The Lord calls us all to go, some to Africa, others to an office; regardless of location, the light of Jesus can be shared and spread, for the goal is for His light to reach every dark corner of the earth. People often try to argue that short-term missions are just a "Christian vacation," that is something that short-term missionaries do not want people to think at all. Short-term mission trips are an opportunity for people to get out of their comfort zone and leave behind the normalities of their lives in hopes to find something more real, to experience something different, new and, in a sense, "more real" than that of the lives they temporarily leave behind.¹⁰³ No matter the length of a mission trip, it still has the capability to be effective. Missions are needed all around the world, and it is a task of utmost importance for someone to take up; arguably, long-term missionaries likely would not invite short-term travelers to come help them if these long-term missionaries were not seeing a reaping of what these people were sowing.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

Short-Term Missions and Social Media

Everyone has seen it before, the picture of a group of caucasian people surrounded by thirty or so impoverished African children is posted on Facebook with one long, heartfelt, meaningful caption, the summary of a short-term mission trip that seemed to be far more for the benefit of the American than the impoverished Africans. This is a common argument used against short-term missions, but it still remains weak against the large positive effect short-term missions can bring. Short-term missions are beneficial to the missionaries, those in the mission field, and, most importantly, the kingdom of God. While some may find it beneficial to post a set of rules for how short-term missions should be portrayed on social media, there is a much more effective discussion that needs to be held regarding the portrayal of missions on social media. First of all, it is important to note, that Matthew 7:3 says, “Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?”¹⁰⁴ This is an important verse to look at because oftentimes people try to judge the heart behind a social media post and then proceed to tear the post apart if they do not believe that poster’s motives are necessarily to glorify God. The problem with this is that the criticizer becomes a hypocrite and is now tearing down people who are doing God's work in other countries. In the past, people heard about the mission trips of others when the missionaries sent news via word or letter to those at home; today, spreading the news of successful missions is as easy as posting a picture with a caption. This is the beginning of the whole story of a mission trip, a story that ought to be shared. One could see a post and it could spark in them an interest to learn more about the poster’s experience, which in turn can encourage him/her to go and experience what missions is

¹⁰⁴ Matthew 7:3

all about; God can use that experience to then call the individual into the mission field. Social media is commonly ridiculed in the area of missions, but it is the ideal form of advertisement for missions as well as an encouragement to many other people. There is a common dispute on what is known as the ‘white savior’ mentality, this is where caucasians go into other countries and take photos to suggest that they are the hero of the people they are serving. These posts can make the locals feel lesser, therefore, it is important to check ones motives at all times during a post about short-term missions and the best solution to this issue, would be to leave oneself out of the photo, or at least do not portray oneself as the hero. With this being said, it still remains true that the only people who can check ones motives of a post on social media, are the ones behind the screen.

Eagle Week

Eagle Week is something that Fort Bend Christian Academy (FBCA, also FBC) has been putting on for many years; the goal of Eagle Week is to obey the mandate found in Acts 1:8, where Christians are called to make disciples of all nations and to the ends of the earth. The school’s goal is to introduce its students to the mission field in hopes that they can make a difference; upon completing an anecdotal study, it is clear that in the indeed, that difference has been made.

Kathy Kirk works for Praying Pelican Missions in Jamaica, and she shared a bit of how Fort Bend Christian has made an impact there. She was asked a series of questions and her responses were nothing short of what one may expect. In response to the first question—“How

has Fort Bend Christian positively impacted your work in Jamaica as well as negatively (if any)?”—Kirk responded:¹⁰⁵

“The students and leaders from Fort Bend have left a lasting impact on the students at the schools that they have served at. The children look forward every year to the return of the team. The love that has been poured into the lives of the children at the school, Westhaven Children's Home and Hopewell Baptist is immeasurable. The children thrive on the one on one attention that has been given to them. God's love has been very evident through projects, VBS and the time that the team has spent with everyone they have come in contact with. The team has strengthened our relationship with Pastor Thomas at Hopewell Baptist Church as they have continued to return to minister to him and his community each year. Two occasions that really stand out to me are when Pastor Thomas's parents home was burnt down after a home invasion right before Fort Bend arrived. I shared this with the leaders after they arrived. The team began to lift Pastor Thomas and his parent's up in prayer and really poured into them, at the end of the week the blessed his parents with a substantial gift to help rebuild and replace the things that they lost in the fire. This act of kindness truly blessed Pastor Thomas and his family. Also last year when the team was in Jamaica, one of our long standing partners Mr. Stedman Henry and his wife where the team was lodging lost their grandson due to an unforeseen illness. The team wrapped their arms around the Henry's and prayed for them and helped them get through one of the most devastating times in their lives. The Henry's were so grateful for the love that was shown to them. Fort Bend has truly been the hands and feet of Christ and have really impacted and fostered growing relationships for PPM in Jamaica.”¹⁰⁶

Heather Reyes from the Dominican Republic at Doulos Discovery School was asked the same question and had a very similar answer: “The FBC group has allowed for the Angosto project to grow and flourish. If it weren't for you all it might not have been possible for it to be where it is today and continuing to grow.”¹⁰⁷ Upon being specifically asked if there has been any negative impact that Fort Bend has had on their ministry neither interviewee hesitated to say there has never been a problem with their ministry and Fort Bend. Arguing that short-term

¹⁰⁵ Based on studies I conducted

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

missions are ineffective one to also argue that eagle week is ineffective, but, according to the interviewees in charge of their respective ministries, FBCA is performing wonders, and they appreciate it greatly. Though, one could argue that even if the responses are biased because they want us to come back, this shows that FBC has been effective, since they actually want us back (and therefore give biased answers).

The next question that these women were asked was if there were still people at FBCA that keep in contact with either them personally or other people from their ministry; both women answered “yes” to this question. It is of utmost importance to keep in contact with missionaries as a short-term missionary because these short-term missionaries are the mediators between long-term missionaries and people at home, sharing specific things that the homefront should be praying for as well as maintaining contact with long-term missionaries to encourage and help lift their spirits on days that they feel isolated or alone. As to whether there was any awareness of the financial support Fort Bend Christian provided, Kirk and Reyes each had a different response. Ms. Kirk admitted that she was unaware of any donations coming into their organization from FBCA, while Mrs. Reyes shared that to the best of her knowledge there are FBCA students and or families who are helping to fund one of Doulos’s side projects. An essential part of short-term missions is donations and financial assistance; without these donations, some mission organizations would not be able to run properly. FBCA could possibly work on placing a heavier emphasis on the students either bringing a simple donation along with them on the trip or reaching out after the trip to offer some financial assistance. For instance, on an eagle week trip last year that went to Susani, Romania many students were impacted by how difficult it was for the long-term missionaries to transport children in and out of their villages to

bring them to VBS; the problem: they did not have enough busses. When these students arrived back in the United States, one girl in particular decided to design shirts for the other students to sell in order to raise money for the ministry to buy a new bus. This was a simple idea sparked by the impact of a short-term mission, and idea that will have a lasting impact on the long-term missionaries in Romania.

The last question asked was how they would describe Fort Bend Christian Academy's overall impact on their work in their specific area? Ms. Kirk from Jamaica replied by saying,

“Fort Bend's ministry is truly intentional when they serve in Jamaica. For most of the team their love for Christ is evident in all they do and say. Fort Bend has truly poured into the ministries and people which has caused our relationships at all of their ministry sites to be strengthened because of them. We truly look forward to serving with and alongside the team from Fort Bend each year. They have impacted many lives including our staff in Jamaica and we hope that those relationships continue to grow as we serve together for the Kingdom.”¹⁰⁸

Mrs. Reyes from the Dominican Republic had a similar response, stating, “I believe that you all (FBCA) have made a greater impact than you will ever know. There are kids and families being blessed through the Angosto community center and will continue to for many years to come.” The Angosto community center is a building that two groups from FBCA contributed greatly towards building; this building now works as a facility for children on the mountain, mainly girls, to be a safehouse that keeps them from being sent into sex trafficking by their own fathers. According to Kirk and Reyes, Fort Bend Christian is doing amazing things through eagle week and will hopefully not only continue to do amazing things but also be willing to grow spiritually as well as grow as a community of missionaries.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

To enhance this impact further, one suggestion would be to implement an Eagle Day; this would take place once every nine weeks, and it would be a day where students meet with their Eagle Week group. These students would then all group together to serve the needs of someone, as well as have the chance to bond and grow as a group before the actual trip takes place. This could encourage students to do more service in their community and be challenged in multiple ways including their faith and understanding of others' needs. Places in the community that could use this assistance are as follows: Second Mile Missions, Gigi's Playhouse, Pennywise Donation store and the nearby Women's shelter, Silverado Sugar Land Memory Care Community, Hospitals, etc. These organizations would not be set therefore meaning that the choice of organization would be left up to the schools discretion; this would be very productive for the growth of the students as individuals as well as a group. This suggestion is not made to imply that what FBCA's eagle week is doing is not amazing, but rather it was made to emphasize the fact that everyone should be striving for improvement and this is one way that this organization could strive towards more.

Who is Short-Term Missions Affecting?

Is the Money Worth It?

People have argued that short-term missions have an effect solely on the person bringing the gospel and an insignificant effect on the people being ministered to. If short-term missions is done effectively, however, this will not be a problem. To be effective, short-term missionaries must have a "Great Commissioners" goal in mind; that is, they must learn to share the gospel and bring recognition to the people, not to themselves. When discussing short-term missions, it is important to note that it is hard to argue the effectiveness while people are continually noticing

mission organizations go paint a house and then leave with barely a word to the homeowners about the love of Christ. Missions, in this sense, become the equivalent of NGO service projects, which can be effective; however, it is much more important to go into a place and love on the people there as well as continuing to do service for them and bless them in that way, for that is what differentiates missions from non-profit service projects. There are multiple missions organizations whose sole job is to spread the gospel. For example, the ministry Biblica's goal is to write the Bible in every language so that people of all nations can read the Bible in their native language. Biblica has also created multiple audio versions of the Bible for blind and illiterate people. The reactions of people receiving these Bibles being in their language for the first time is evidence that the moment is one that will change their lives forever; Biblica is making Bible's available for everyone to read in their own language which is breaking down the language barrier that stand in the way of missionaries. It is as if you are watching a blind man see for the first time; they do not know how to handle what they have just seen.

Another form of short-term missions that is becoming increasingly more popular is the act of Christians going into other countries where Christianity is not a commonly accepted religion and sharing the gospel. At first, this may sound just like any other short-term mission, but there is a catch, these people then teach those who accept Jesus how to begin and run a home church that can then reach more people and bring in more believers. Sugar Creek Baptist Church is actively involved in this form of ministry and is sending its members to some of the most dangerous countries for Christians in the world.

There are many arguments against the effect that short term missions have on those who the missions are supposed to have an effect on, for example, according to research done by Kurt Alan Ver Beek,

“Critics say North American short-term missionaries often lack necessary training and respect for "nationals," do not speak the local language, are culturally inappropriate and insensitive, and focus on short-term fixes rather than long-term solutions and meaningful learning experiences (Allen 2001, DeHainaut 1995, Heydron 2002, Ver Beek 2002). Others argue that these trips too often become expensive efforts that assuage North Americans' guilt and satisfy their curiosity but do little lasting good. They point out that short-termers can easily spend \$30,000 in traveling costs to build a \$2,000 house with less spiritual change than if the work was done by local Christians who follow-up on their efforts. Short-term missions, they argue, also distract full-time missionaries while leaving the local population dependent and misunderstood (Becchetti 1997, Jeffrey 2001, Searle 1982, Van Engen 2000). The millions (probably billions) of dollars spent could be better invested in long-term efforts. Proponents argue that North American participants change the lives of those they serve by providing needed goods and services and sharing the gospel. In addition, proponents say STMs open North Americans' eyes to needs around the world and make them more faithful long-term supporters of the STM beneficiaries (Hestenes 2000, Anderson 1992, McDonough 1996, Kirby 1995). They also say STMS strengthen participants' faith and act as stepping-stones for young people considering long-term mission careers (Pocock 1987, Loobie 2000, Beers 1999, Tuttle 1998).”¹⁰⁹

Ver Beek conducted a study in order to try and determine who was more affected by short-term missions—the short-termer or the people residing in the place of ministry. In his study he surveyed 127 people who were sent to rebuild homes in Honduras after a drastic hurricane, and then he surveyed seventy-eight beneficiaries in six regions of Honduras, where short-termers¹¹⁰ had been sent out to rebuild their homes, about half of whom lived in homes built by STM groups and half in homes built without short-termers' help. His goal was to see if the person whose home was built by a short-termer was more changed or affected than the

¹⁰⁹ Kurt Ver Beek. 2008. Lessons from the sapling: Review of quantitative research on short-term missions. In *Effective Engagement in Short-Term Missions: Doing it Right!* (edited by Robert Priest, William Carey Library), pp. 469-496.

¹¹⁰ That is, short-term missionaries.

person whose home was not; through his research he discovered that in fact both groups were for the most part equally affected, regardless of whether they had short-term builders or not. The Hondurans that they interviewed made some suggestions to short-termers on how they could make a larger impact when they come to bring Gods' love to people; they suggested that these short-termers would have better benefited them if they had interacted with the Hondurans more. These Hondurans claimed to have loved the teachings and positive energy that the short-term group brought but wished there was more personal interaction. According to one of the Hondurans, "the truth is that they [short-term missionaries] don't have to come here to build homes. If they come, they should come for friendships, for the cultural exchange. The most important is the relationship with the people." This shows that the short-term group's mission, along with all short term missions, was still effective but it needed to take into account the importance and value that the Hondurans place on relationships as well as the importance of making sure to not intrude on work that the locals could greatly benefit from.

Statistics on Short-Term Missions

A century ago, before the existence of short-term missions, missionaries were typically required to commit to years of service. Today, with the ease and efficiency of travel, churches and nonprofit leaders have also begun encouraging this different form of group engagement known as short-term mission trips. A new study from The Barna Group shows that most of the people who go on short-term missions describe the trips as life-changing; specifically, three-quarters of trip-goers report that the experience changed their life in some way.¹¹¹ Yet the research also shows that few adults have ever gone on a short-term service trip. Christians often

¹¹¹ "Despite Benefits, Few Americans Have Experienced Short-Term Mission Trips." Barna Group. Accessed December 9, 2019.

use the phrase “life-changing” when describing most short-term service trips. According to the Barna Group:

“only one-quarter of those who have participated in such a trip said it was “just an experience,” while a majority said it changed their life in some way. The most common areas of personal growth that people recall – even years later – include becoming more aware of other people’s struggles (25%), learning more about poverty, justice, or the world (16%), increasing compassion (11%), deepening or enriching their faith (9%), broadening their spiritual understanding (9%), and boosting their financial generosity (5%). Others mentioned the experience helped them feel more fulfilled, become more grateful, develop new friends, and pray more.”¹¹²

Despite the accessibility and personal benefits that have recently begun to come along with short-term mission, most Americans have never experienced such a short-term service project; statistically speaking, only 8 million of the 228 million adult residents of the U.S. have been on a short-term mission trip in the last five years.

The Barna Group determined, therefore, that a person does not have to go far away in order to experience personal growth, through serving others. People who took service trips close to home reported the same amount of life-changing experiences as those who traveled abroad.

Researcher David Kinnaman clarified that

This research does not measure the benefit to the people being helped, since we only interviewed Americans for this project. But short-term missions clearly benefit the people providing the assistance. Many pastors, parents and teachers are searching for ways to transform hearts and minds. One promising way to go about changing people’s perspectives is to go on a service adventure together.¹¹³

One of the major keys to the concept of short-term missions is the changing of one’s perspective in a short amount of time, thus enhancing the impact he/she experiences. This is important but does not mean that the people who are being provided with assistance are not also

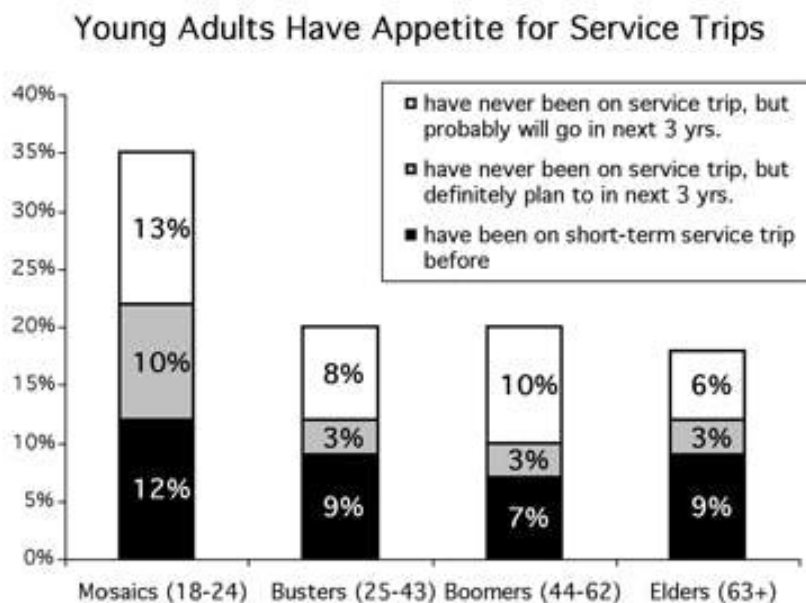
¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid.

being benefited; those people, as stated above, are being benefited just as much as the benefactors.

Short term missions are rising as a desirable option for the current generation, as shown by the Barna study:

The Barna study gives evidence that the emerging generation wants to serve the needs of others in short-term missions. For instance, young adults are more likely than the Boomer generation to have ever been on a service trip in the past (12% versus 7%, respectively). Moreover, young adults (defined as those under the age of 25) express strong interest in participating in future short-term service trips. Overall, 10% of young adults said they would definitely go on such a trip in the next three years, compared to just 3% among older adults. Barna researchers refer to the under-25 segment as the Mosaic generation because of their eclectic lifestyles and diversity. Kinnaman, who is president of The Barna Group, pointed out that “Mosaics are globally aware and cause-oriented. They relish risk, stimulation, and diverse experiences. And they are more sensitive to issues related to justice and poverty. Their craving to take journeys of service could fuel a resurgence of global engagement. Yet, the danger would be if leaders and organizations waste the Mosaic generation’s readiness by simply allowing young adults to be mere ‘consumers of cause’ – selling them a t-shirt or a wristband, instead of challenging them to life-shaping service projects.”



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¹¹⁴ Ibid.

This report is based upon telephone interviews conducted in August 2008 by The Barna Group with a random sample of 1005 adults selected from all around the United States. The requirements for this survey were that the person must be of age 18 and older and must be a born-again Christian (also known as an Evangelical). In the survey, people qualified as evangelicals if they meet the born-again criteria plus seven other conditions:

Those included saying that their religious faith is very important in their life today; believing they have a personal responsibility to share their religious beliefs about Christ with non-Christians; believing that Satan exists; believing that eternal salvation is possible only through grace, not works; believing that Jesus Christ lived a sinless life on earth; asserting that the Bible is accurate in all that it teaches; and describing God as the all-knowing, all-powerful, perfect deity who created the universe and still rules it today. Being classified as an evangelical is not dependent upon church attendance or the denominational affiliation of the church attended. Respondents were not asked to describe themselves as “evangelical.”¹¹⁵

This research is important to discuss, for it shows the growth that short-term missions has had over the years; while this information does exclude the work short-term missions is doing, it at least shows the importance of short-term missions and its growth. While looking at this information, one could estimate that these mission trips have cost in total approximately two billion dollars a year, causing many people to ask, “Could the money that one spends to go on a mission trip have a better benefit if it were used solely towards the donation of the ministry and not for the donor’s personal gain?” The problem with this is that it makes the incorrect assumption that mission trips are only for the benefit of the missionary and not the people in the mission field. Moreover, it excludes the effectiveness of the work that short-term missionaries are doing for the long-term missionaries in the region they are visiting. Short-term missions is the planting of a seed; one person or group may not radically change a person's life forever, but

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

they could be the one to plant the seed of faith into a person's heart. The long-term effects are the ones that the short-termers may never see but that does not mean that they are not there.

Conclusion

Is going for a week any help at all? With the rise of short-term missions in the 21st century, the effectiveness of these missions has come into question; through my research I found that the answer to this question is yes. Short-term missions are effective in how they impact the lives of the short-term missionaries as well as the people in the places they are going to; short-term missions can be used by God to reveal His calling of someone into long-term missions or to benefit financially and mentally the long-term missionary that short-termers are going to work with. Short-term missions are vitally important to the mission ministry as a whole; they work to spread the gospel throughout the world, share the love of Christ with others, and serve those who in some ways cannot serve themselves. While this sounds exactly like long-term missions, the difference is this: short-term missions require more people than long-term missions do; therefore, more people can have a life-changing experience that instills in them a passion for missions, which in turn adds to the number of long-term missionaries or increases the amount of financial support needed for ministry. When digging deeper into short-term missions, it is clear that many people have argued the vitalness of short-term missions in the scheme of missions as a whole; again, when looking into this it is clear that when done correctly, short-term missions are effective. No matter what skill or service someone is bringing into a certain place, their love and urge to share Jesus' love makes a large impact on the people.

The importance of short-term missions is unarguable. Through extensive research, it has become abundantly clear that the effect of short-term missions is undeniably positive.

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