

Liberty University John W. Rawlings School of Divinity

A Look at Short-Term Mission Trips in the Context of  
Cypress Baptist Church as a Sending Unit

A Thesis Project Submitted to  
the Faculty of Liberty University School of Divinity  
in Candidacy for the Degree of  
Doctor of Ministry

By

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## THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY THESIS PROJECT ABSTRACT

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This thesis project is a study on short-term missions in the context of Cypress Baptist Church as a sending unit. The purpose of this project is to seek answers of why many of Cypress members are choosing not to engage globally by being part of the ministry of short-term missions at Cypress. Cypress Baptist Church is a rapidly growing church, and as it grows it should see more members participating in short-term missions. The goal is to ask the people of Cypress questions centered around this project so the project manager can get candid, real answers to why many are not participating. The project will use questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, and on the field data to listen and hear from Cypress members on this subject. The project manager will study other projects and writings on the subject of short-term missions—specifically for the church—to help guide this thesis project to a complete understanding of short-term missions. The goal within this project after hearing the reasons for not going is to begin the process to see more of Cypress members involved in short-term missions. Although this project is about seeing and hearing the answers of why more members of Cypress are not participating, through the results it will hopefully produce answers to alleviate these reasons in many of the members of Cypress Baptist Church to see Cypress as a whole engage globally.

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## **Abbreviations**

DMIN	<i>Doctor of Ministry</i>
LUSOD	<i>Liberty University School of Divinity</i>
NASB	<i>New American Standard Bible</i>
STM	<i>Short-term Mission</i>
STMT	<i>Short-term Mission Trip</i>

## Chapter 1

### Introduction

The thesis project is a study on short-term mission trips in the context of Cypress Baptist Church in Benton, Louisiana, as a sending unit. This project is not about Cypress's actual short-term mission trips but about the people of Cypress and their willingness to go to nations to share the gospel and build on the church. Cypress would be considered a rural church located south of Benton's city limits. Even though Cypress's location is in a small town with very few businesses surrounding it, it is quickly becoming a mega-church. Cypress demographics consist of a large portion being upper-middle-class as well as lower-middle class. Because of this social standing—the people of Cypress already have all they need—there is not a sense to go to the nations. One question this project will address is why Cypress members should be attending short-term mission trips to other nations in the first place. Andy Stanley writes, "But it is an individual's willingness to break through the barriers imposed by risk and sacrifice that positions him or her to see what could be become a reality."<sup>1</sup> This project will study why many Cypress members do not commit to go on a short-term mission trip offered through the church.

There are many opportunities to go and serve—Cypress has many regional and international partners—outside of Benton. Cypress does an excellent job serving in the context of the local area. Cypress has opportunities to go beyond the local area, where many do not see the need to give time and money. As Matt Chandler writes, "When discipleship is no longer about a way of living, but about information to be learned, a compartmentalization takes place in our spiritual thinking that results in hypocrisy."<sup>2</sup> Cypress has a former staff member planting a

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<sup>1</sup> Andy Stanley, *Visioneering: God's Blueprint for Developing and Maintaining Personal Vision* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Book, 1999), 127.

<sup>2</sup> Matt Chandler, *The Explicit Gospel* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 181.

church in Brooklyn, New York, where the church is investing financially and sending teams yearly. There are partnerships in Mexico, Ukraine, Africa, Panama, and Guatemala where at least every other year, if not every year, there are opportunities for Cypress people to go and invest in the lives of those who need the gospel. This project will be a study of why Cypress members do not go and how to begin the process to alleviate these reasons for not going.

### **Ministry Context**

Cypress Baptist Church was established in 1977 by a group who desired to see Cypress going to the nations to share the gospel and build on the church. Many are still the charter members and are the church's foundation helping Cypress become more vital as a church. These charter members left another church in Benton, Louisiana, in 1977 to begin Cypress Baptist Church. The local area church was having revival meetings for a week. This church was an all-white church, and an African American family decided to visit during the revival meetings. This African American family gave their lives to Christ and wanted to follow in believer's baptism, but they were refused baptism because of their skin color by a select few leaders in the church. Many left this particular local church because it was not in line with the whole gospel of seeing all come to know Christ and work together as a body of believers.

J. D. Greear writes, "I want to show you that the real potential for a multiethnic movement lies in the creating of a sending culture at your church."<sup>3</sup> The charter members began meeting in St. Jude's Catholic Church in Benton, Louisiana, in Cypress's beginnings. Greear writes, "This means ordinary people can be used mightily in the mission of God."<sup>4</sup> There is even

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<sup>3</sup>J.D. Greear, *Gaining by Losing: Why the Future Belongs to Churches that Send* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 162.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 104.

a video of these charter members building the first worship center in 1978 located in the same spot today.

There is much history from 1977-2020 in the life of Cypress Baptist Church. Alan Hirsch, Ed Stetzer, and Jeff Vanderstelt say in their book, “The truth is that the twenty-first century is turning out to be a highly complex phenomenon where terrorism, paradigmatic technological innovation, and unsustainable environment, rampant consumerism, discontinuous change, and perilous ideologies confronts at every point.”<sup>5</sup> Rampant consumerism and discontinuous change stand out here because these are descriptive terms for North Bossier's culture. Cypress's location is in Benton, Louisiana, in Bossier City. The culture, in some ways is really simple. If parents can make a good salary, live in a house that fits their lifestyle, have their kids involved in activities that the other kids are involved in, go to church and be a good church member, then family life is good. A quote from one pastor to another says about this area, “The people are too busy living to really do life.”<sup>6</sup> The problem with this type of life is, although it is good, there is more to life than extra-curricular activities and a good-paying job. D. A. Carson sums this up well in his book with this quote.

“People do not drift toward holiness. Apart from grace-driven effort, people do not gravitate toward godliness, prayer, obedience to Scripture, faith, and delight in the Lord. We drift toward compromise and call it tolerance; we drift toward disobedience and call it freedom; we drift toward superstition and call it faith. We cherish the indiscipline of lost self-control and call it relaxation; we slouch toward prayerlessness and delude ourselves into thinking we have escaped legalism; we slide toward godlessness and convince ourselves we have been liberated.”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Alan Hirsch, Ed Stetzer, and Jeff Vanderstelt, *The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating Apostolic Movements* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2006), 16.

<sup>6</sup>Conversation with a local pastor, 2016. Interviewee's name withheld by mutual agreement.

<sup>7</sup>D.A. Carson, *For the Love of God: A Daily Companion of Discovering the Riches of God's Word*, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1999), 23.

## Pastoral Leadership

The best way to understand the culture of ministry is to study the history of Cypress's leadership. When Cypress began, it had a few short-term pastors, but then came Brother Billy Pierce. Billy Pierce came on as pastor in the early 1980s and served Cypress as senior pastor for 19 years before retirement. Under his tenure, the church saw consistent growth with several years of strong baptisms, even one year with over 100 baptisms. Billy Pierce retired in 2003, loved and cherished even to this day as Pastor Emeritus. The church soon called their next pastor, who remains unnamed because of the nature of his tenure. As Keith Gebhart writes in his paper, "This Ministry Focus Paper attempts to explore this potentially volatile predicament, in the hope of establishing some biblical and practical suggestions on how a senior pastor may transition these types of congregations for successful pastorates."<sup>8</sup> This statement says a lot about the situation because the transition did not go well. The new pastor immediately began making changes within worship that brought the church to a standstill. The people of Cypress love to worship, but at that time, worship meant traditional with hymns and biblical preaching. He desired to add secular songs to worship and bring in many creative ways to preach that center more on the story than the Bible. In 2003-2004 the church was running 700 to almost 800 in worship.<sup>9</sup>, however, that soon ended. By the time the new pastor left, the church was running well below 500, a drop of almost 400 people. In the end, the church could not accept the changes the pastor was trying to bring, and he stepped down as Pastor of Cypress. Missions became very stagnant at Cypress, even to the point that nothing was happening.

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<sup>8</sup>Keith Gebhart, "Transitional Leadership After the Long Tenured Pastorate" (Ministry Focused Paper, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1999), 5.

<sup>9</sup>Numbers come from charted numbers from Cecil Winn, Executive Pastor.

Billy Pierce came back on as Interim-Pastor for almost three years before John Fream—the current pastor of over twelve years—came as the Senior Pastor. There was a time over twenty years ago where John and the current missions pastor—the author of this project—were young student pastors serving in churches just a few miles from each other located in Northwest Arkansas. In a short time there, John and the current Missions Pastor became good friends. God led John Fream to Cypress in August of 2008, and his transition story goes as follows. He came as a hurting pastor to a hurting church, and they both loved each other for healing from the Holy Spirit to grow to become the church it is becoming today.<sup>10</sup> When a church loses half its members by a former pastor's leadership, it causes much pain in distrust in the pastor's position no matter who it is. John brought trust to the position by leading with character and integrity. As Jim Wilson writes in his book, "Evil does exist. Satan is alive and does want to destroy churches."<sup>11</sup> Satan will do everything he can to destroy the church. One way to do this is by hurting the shepherd, the senior pastor. Another way is by destroying the church itself. It was the same where Pastor John was previously pastoring. These two hurting groups came together and began letting God heal them and use them for His glory for kingdom work. The importance of this in connection to this project is that Cypress was not doing missions. Cypress was unwilling to do missions or was even healthy enough to think about missions outside of itself. It needed healing. As healing happened, there is more desire to go to the nations, but many are still not sacrificing.

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<sup>10</sup>Conversation with Pastor John Fream, 2014, Senior Pastor of Cypress Baptist Church.

<sup>11</sup>Jim L. Wilson, *Pastoral Ministry in the Real World: Loving, Teaching, and Leading God's People* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2015), 117.

## Church Growth Attendance

When Pastor John Fream came in 2008, the church was running less than 500 on average. The church as a whole felt that from the way things ended, there needed to be an intentional interim pastor, and since Brother Billy was still attending, he would be the best person to lead them through a difficult time. On the first Sunday in August of 2008, John Fream comes on as Senior Pastor of Cypress Baptist Church with a heart to love Cypress's people. From 2009 to 2010, the church grew consistently to almost 800 in worship. By 2013 Cypress was averaging just under 1000 in worship. By 2014, the missions pastor position came on staff, and the church was just under 1100 to over 1200 in 2015. Then from 2016, Cypress saw tremendous growth reaching almost 1700 by 2019.<sup>12</sup> 2020 exploded with the first two months averaging over 1900 in worship. John's leadership with his staff has taken Cypress from a medium-size rural church to a thriving, growing church with a vision for the nations with the gospel as the focus. The numbers and growth should show a church thriving, with many going on short-term mission trips. The opportunities are there, but the people are not committing. As Matt Chandler writes, "The only acceptable response to the gospel is nothing less than a heart of faith."<sup>13</sup>

## Baptismal Growth

When a church grows as Cypress grows early in a pastor's leadership, there can be many reasons for this growth. This statement by Henry and Richard Blackaby alludes to what Pastor John was and is doing through Cypress. "If vision is critical for organizations, it stands to reason leaders must be visionaries. Visionary leaders understand at least three fundamental issues: (1)

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<sup>12</sup>Numbers come from charted numbers from Cecil Winn, Executive Pastor.

<sup>13</sup>Chandler, *The Explicit Gospel*, 68.

the source of vision; (2) how vision inspires people; and (3) how leaders communicate vision.”<sup>14</sup> The vision of Cypress merely is "Loving God, and Loving People." There were 14 baptisms in 2008, which were the lowest in the history of Cypress. 2019 saw the most baptisms in the history of Cypress with 214<sup>15</sup>, furthermore, Cypress is on track to surpass that number in 2020, even amid Covid-19. These numbers are all positive information except that the people do not see this vision for the gospel beyond Benton. As international partnerships form, the people need to take this same mindset to the nations.

### Sunday School Growth

As Cypress is becoming a large church, there has to be a ministry in place for people to stay connected to other believers besides a worship time of almost 2000 people. While many churches have changed the names and methods of Bible study or small groups, Cypress still does Sunday School. Sunday School is at three different times every Sunday morning, 8:00 a.m., 9:15 a.m., and 10:45 a.m. When Pastor John came in 2008, Sunday School attendance was higher than worship attendance by over 100 people. These results show a response to leadership in a negative perspective. When people choose small groups over worship, it results from a lack of trust in leadership, and the church is thinking more inward than outward. Thom S. Rainer says, “Expository preaching was second to Sunday School among the methodologies that are effective in assimilation.”<sup>16</sup> The next two years changed. Sunday School attendance grew to almost 800, but so did worship attendance. There is not a big difference in either number. From then on,

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<sup>14</sup>Henry and Richard Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership: Moving People onto God's Agenda* (Nashville, TN.: B&H Publishing, 2011), 63.

<sup>15</sup>Numbers come from charted numbers from Cecil Winn, Executive Pastor.

<sup>16</sup>Thom S. Rainer, *High Expectations: The Remarkable Secret of Keeping People in the Church* (Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing Group, 1999), 29.



Sunday School grew each year as worship attendance did. Although worship attendance numbers surpassed Sunday School attendance, the growth stayed steady. This growth is essential because leadership worship and Sunday School are both vital to Cypress and the members becoming connected and for the members to know God's Word fully. Under John's leadership, Cypress has grown. He is instilling a vision into the people. As Richard and Henry Blackaby say, "Spiritual leaders do not use their people to achieve their ends; their people are the end."<sup>17</sup> The goal of John Fream for Cypress for the people to own the vision and then take it outside of themselves and sacrifice everything for the kingdom.

### Missions History

The last few paragraphs have shown a history of Cypress's growth, but there is still some lacking understanding of each person's role in reaching the nations. In a conversation with Pastor John, he said in 2008, the church was doing nothing in missions when he first came. They were giving to a church in New York supposedly working with a Muslim people group, and they thought that was enough.<sup>18</sup> He immediately began to try and change this mindset. He often quotes PLN Murthy, a good friend of his from many years of serving and supporting him through a ministry in India called "Bible to Nations." "A church that goes is a church that grows."<sup>19</sup> John stopped the partnership in New York shortly after he came on staff because it was not producing any church members, and there was no communication with the missionary on a consistent basis. He then began taking teams to India to work with PLN Murthy—an Indian

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<sup>17</sup>Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership*, 48.

<sup>18</sup>Conversation with Pastor John Fream, 2014, Pastor Cypress Baptist Church.

<sup>19</sup>PLN Murthy, Bible to Nations leader, was killed by Muslims and Hindus in 2016 in India after returning from a trip from the United States for leaving Hinduism and spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ.

missionary saved out of Hinduism who had a ministry in India passing out Bibles and bringing girls out sex trafficking—and Bibles to Nations. Between 2011 and 2013, a doctor and his wife, a nurse, began traveling to Panama and soon approached Pastor John about taking teams to Panama to work with orphans. Through that conversation, Panama is now the flagship country for Cypress. Cypress even supports Kathy, a Panamanian lady who works with the orphanage in Boquete, Panama continuing the work year-round. Even with this continuing partnership, there is a lack of commitment from the people to go. Trips for Panama still have the same people going, and there is not much interest for new people to sign-up. Paul McGuiness writes, "A true partnership is a mutually beneficial, two-way relationship in which both sides offer some of their strengths and resources, as well as receive some benefits an added value."<sup>20</sup>

In 2014 Cypress Baptist Church and John Fream hired its first-ever Missions Pastor, the author of this project. When the new Missions Pastor came on staff, his job was to continue working with the current partnerships and hopefully grow into some new partnerships. Paul refers in Romans 1:12<sup>21</sup> the point of fellowshiping together so each other can encourage each other. In Acts 11:22<sup>22</sup>, Barnabas, a Levite of Cyprian birth, is with the church in Jerusalem, and he is sent to the church in Antioch to do ministry with them. Richard Stearns writes, "Jesus seeks a new world order in this gospel, hallmarked by compassion, justice, and proclamation of the good news, and as it becomes a reality, first in our hearts and minds, and can then be in the wider

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<sup>20</sup>Paul McGuiness, *Walk this Way: A Better Path to Global Engagement* (Atlanta, Georgia: 181 Publishing, 2015), 91.

<sup>21</sup>Unless otherwise noted, all biblical passages referenced employ the *New American Standard Version* (La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1977).

<sup>22</sup>Acts 11:22, (NASB).

world through our influence."<sup>23</sup> Stearns describes well the goal of the partnership. The Missions Pastor had already been working with a ministry in Kyiv, Ukraine, called Radooga—rainbow in English—since 2006. Because of the Missions Pastor's relationship with this ministry, Cypress began to take teams to Ukraine in 2016. Oleg and Lena Vasilevsky, the founders and president of Radooga, have even visited Cypress several times. Paul is referring to this encouragement between partnerships as he wrote Romans chapter 1<sup>24</sup>. Cypress is now actively growing its international partners as the church itself grows too. The partnerships are now in Mexico, Ukraine, Panama, Africa, and Guatemala. God is growing the missions at Cypress. The hope is to grow even more significant, but until there is a commitment from the people to go to more countries, the ministry of short-term missions will not grow to its fullest potential.

### Culture and Rituals

Robert Lewis and Wayne Cordeiro write, "Culture is the most important social reality in your church."<sup>25</sup> Cypress is driven by great people that genuinely love their community and wish to see it grow. One of the primary purposes that Cypress is growing is because the people see Cypress making a positive impact on North Bossier's community. The most significant part the people value is each other through church, school, and extra-curricular activities. These are the primary rituals that define Cypress and North Bossier. People love to gather together. Lewis and Cordeiro write, "Every church is a little culture in itself."<sup>26</sup> The problem relates to the culture, which leads to the rituals, halts the people from seeing the need to share God's love with the

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<sup>23</sup>Richard Stearns, *The Hole in Our Gospel: The Answer that Changed My Life and Might Just Change the World* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2010), 243.

<sup>24</sup>Rom. 1 (NASB).

<sup>25</sup>Robert Lewis and Wayne Cordeiro, *Culture Shift: Transforming Your Church from the Inside Out* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2005), 3.

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*, 41.

nations. As Lewis and Cordeiro continue, "A downhill shift from being good to looking good can bring about spiritual superficiality."<sup>27</sup> The culture is all well and good until the call comes to go outside of the comfort zone. North Bossier people are very comfortable in their everyday lives that the sacrifice of a short-term mission trip just does not fit into their schedule.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, Paul David Tripp writes, "Remember again that the ministry you are doing is never just shaped by your gifts, knowledge, skill, and experience. It is always also shaped by the true condition of your heart."<sup>28</sup> Cypress is going to the nations. As said before, there are partnerships in Guatemala, Mexico, Africa, Ukraine, and Panama. The problem lies that either the same people are going, or there is not enough interest in going without first begging for more participants. Tripp goes on to write, "In every situation, location, and relationship of your ministry, there is a war going on for what glory will magnetize your heart and, therefore, shape your ministry."<sup>29</sup> Cypress's challenge is for more members to stop saying no and begin saying yes. and why this thesis project is so important.

### Problem Presented

This research project will address how many Christians at Cypress do not see a need to share Christ on short-term mission trips and how this project can help the ministry of short of missions enhance more to go to the nations. Many do not go because it will interfere with their family, kids, and work. There is a sense within the community that Christians are good enough as long as they go to church, work, and are good parents. Many people choose to serve in

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<sup>27</sup>Lewis and Cordeiro, *Culture Shift*, 41.

<sup>28</sup>Paul David Trip, *Dangerous Calling: Confronting the Unique Challenges of Pastoral Ministry* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), 120.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 120.

different capacities in Cypress's ministries, but the bigger sacrifice outside of Sunday and Wednesday is not there. Jesus called his apostles, and then He called the church to go as laid out in the book of Acts. Don N. Howell Jr. writes, "He formally commissioned twelve men to be his 'apostles,' that is, 'ones sent forth' to represent the dynamic rule he was inaugurating."<sup>30</sup> There is the mindset of many that going to the nations is not essential, but vacationing to see the world is important. There is inward thinking. It seems as Cypress grows in numbers, those wanting to serve on short-term mission trips are decreasing. The urgency to go to the nations outside of the few that already go consistently is not there. The problem is causing some trips not to have enough to go and support the host countries. MacMillan writes, "Alignment is achieved one person at a time."<sup>31</sup>

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this DMIN action research thesis project is to study why more Cypress Baptist Church members do not commit to going to the nations. It is to gain knowledge of the reasons Cypress is using on not going. Through this knowledge, the project will help recruit, train, and alleviate why many are using not to go. Albert Mohler writes, "Passion must arise out of conviction."<sup>32</sup> The goal is to disciple Cypress members in missional living with the primary purpose of seeing members of Cypress Baptist Church commit to going on short-term mission trips. The short-term mission is a ministry that is a vital arm of Cypress. In learning answers to why many are not participating in the ministry of short-term missions, it will hopefully lead to

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<sup>30</sup>Don N. Howell, Jr., *Servants of the Servant: A Biblical Theology of Leadership* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2003), 133.

<sup>31</sup>Pat MacMillan, *The Performance Factor: Unlocking the Secrets of Teamwork* (Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing Group, 2001), 102.

<sup>32</sup>Albert Mohler, *The Conviction to Lead: 25 Principles for Leadership that Matters* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 2012), 52.

developing a more detailed training plan for members in recruiting and training for trips, and this must come from leadership. Mohler writes, "Every great leader is a great teacher, and the greatest leaders seize every opportunity to teach well."<sup>33</sup>

There will be more hands-on communication before and after trips. This communication will help Cypress see why people are going and what changes they are making after returning. The goal is to come back from a short-term mission trip with more missional living by serving and giving at Cypress and outside of Cypress, and communicating the change will hopefully help in recruiting. As this project continues and grows, it will see Cypress members become more missional in their daily lives as they commit to the ministry of short-term missions at Cypress.

### **Basic Assumptions**

The project has some unreasonable expectations that need explaining to give clarity to readers. The assumption is that many Cypress Baptist Church members do not sign-up and go on short-term mission trips because of the lack of sacrifice. The author is assuming many Cypress members do not want to sacrifice time, money, and family to go on a short-term mission trip. Paul McGinness says, "When it comes to the transforming work that God is initiating around the world—the proclamation of salvation, care of the poor, and advocacy for the oppressed—far too many Christ-followers are content to stay on the bench."<sup>34</sup> The sacrifice would entail giving up vacation time and some financial obligations.

North Bossier is a great community with great people who love being part of the area, but the need to serve outside of their daily life does not seem to be in high demand. The author will assume that a percentage of people believe they are not called to international missions on any

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<sup>33</sup>Mohler, *The Conviction to Lead*, 42.

<sup>34</sup>McGinness, *Walk this Way*, 3.

basis for a variety of reasons. Chapter three will lay out a system with questionnaires and interviews to hopefully get accurate answers. However, then the project is at the participants' influence to trust accurate answers are given. Robert Priest writes, "Churches and agencies should invest time and energy helping volunteers think through their suitability, best placement, contribution to ministry and valid reason for going."<sup>35</sup> With several questionnaires given to different groups within the church, there will hopefully be some accurate data to help understand how first to understand why many are participating in short-term mission trips. Second, it is to learn how to train and equip to see these reasons alleviated. The hope will be that each participant will give accurate, right answers, but this will be assumed as data is received. There will be many different groups used in the project, all from Cypress members. Interviews will take place with some staff members and from people in other ministries. Hopefully, participants will give accurate answers that will help in recruiting and training for future trips. The project's process will require, as McGuinness writes, "There are simple, practical steps you can take to join what God is doing around the globe."<sup>36</sup>

### **Definitions**

It is critical to provide distinct definitions for the terms of short-term mission trips and missional living. Missional living is giving one's life daily to Christ so that the individual reflects Jesus in every word, action, and decision in daily living. William Barclay writes, "Christians must realize that life is given, not to keep for themselves but to spend for others; not to nurture its flame but to burn it out for Christ and for others."<sup>37</sup> It is choosing to let others see Jesus in

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<sup>35</sup>Robert J. Priest, *Effective Engagement in Short-Term Missions: Doing It Right!* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Publishing, 2008), 38.

<sup>36</sup>McGuinness, *Walk this Way*, 3.

<sup>37</sup>William Barclay, *The Gospel of Luke* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 144.

them above themselves. Missional living brings sacrifice to follow Jesus in a believer at all times.

H. Leon Greene writes, “Anything less than two years is a short-term mission trip.”<sup>38</sup> He defines trips of less than four weeks as “cultural exposure with broad goals or purposes.”<sup>39</sup> Cypress trips will be less than four weeks; in fact, they will all be eleven days or less because this is currently the most extended trip that Cypress takes. In this project and within the church’s mission’s ministry, Cypress will call their trips short-term mission trips because this is the best way to define the trips to the church members. This term puts into context the mission and vision of Cypress to the people.

Another term that needs defining and will be used periodically in this project in referring to believers in Christ is missional. Missional is a term that is used with many connotations and will need understanding as this project continues. Ed Stetzer writes, “leaders make a decision to engage an unchurched world with a radical message: the gospel.”<sup>40</sup> Missional is a determination of having a purpose of engaging the gospel in all situations in life for the believer in Christ. In terms of short-term mission trips through Cypress, the first purpose will be to share the gospel and prepare to share the gospel for a short-term mission trip. Cypress strives to be a missional church in all areas of ministry, and as Stetzer writes, being “on mission”<sup>41</sup> should be the goal of all churches. In quoting Stetzer one more time, “on mission means being intentional and

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<sup>38</sup>H. Leon Greene, *A Guide to Short-Term Missions: A Comprehensive Manual for Planning an Effective Mission Trip* (Downers Grove, IL.: InterVarsity Press, 2012), 6.

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup>Ed Stetzer, *Planting Missional Churches* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2006), 27.

<sup>41</sup>*Ibid.*, 28.



deliberate about reaching others.”<sup>42</sup> The foundation for Cypress missions is to share the gospel and build a foundation for the church locally and worldwide. The goal is to see more people being missional in their daily lives.

The third term to define is sending unit. The discussion in this project will center on the church. In context, the church age began in Acts 2 on the day of Pentecost the church was established, and with this establishment, the church began sending missionaries to the field to spread the gospel, plant churches, and further the building of the church all over the world. By sending these missionaries, the church can be defined as a sending unit.

The vision of Cypress for missions still needs defining. Cypress's vision and mission of missions are to share the gospel and lay a foundation for the church. Each trip will be unique as Cypress continues to go on many more trips. As the project continues and the data-gathering stage commences, the vision will need clarification as each trip can be evangelism based, project-based, or working within a particular church. Some trips will have many opportunities to share the gospel one on one and corporately. In contrast, other trips will be more about encountering believers and helping the local church grow a stronger foundation. The church's edification is of utmost importance on all short-term mission trips as the church does the follow-up. It is the local church's responsibility to continue the ministry. Many people have a preconceived notion of what short-term mission trips should be so each trip needs effective communication. As Robert J. Priest writes, "Many short-term mission trip participants have already been on multiple mission trips, but they are still looking for the right sphere of ministry."<sup>43</sup> Understanding the heart of the sending church help's the participants know precisely

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<sup>42</sup>Stetzer, *Planting Missional Churches*, 28.

<sup>43</sup>Priest, *Effective Engagement in Short-term Missions*, 37.

the type of trip they commit to serving. Precise communication is needed from the team leader as he trains and prepares team members to define the vision of Cypress Baptist Church's missions.

### **Limitations**

The culture of North Bossier is not dictated by Cypress Baptist Church, but by all the people of the North Bossier Community. Aubrey Malphurs writes, "Obviously the church's mission is vital to its ministry."<sup>44</sup> The participants involved include the small population of Cypress Baptist church in a much bigger North Bossier populace. The people involved in the project will be a small number of Cypress members, not the whole church. These participants make the number even smaller. The outside influencers of the community—a small group of influencers and many who do not attend Cypress—will limit the effects of the project. These are influencers for the people involved in the project. Malphurs says, "The mission states the direction, and the vision supplies a picture of it."<sup>45</sup> The project will only use Cypress members, but they have friends in the community and outside the community. These are all influencers. There will also be those who are active members of Cypress, who will influence this project. They may not be directly helping with the project itself, but they will still be influencers. The results of the project taken from the participants will have to be trusted. There is going to be outside information influencing the answers and decisions of all those involved.

### **Delimitations**

The subject of this thesis project dwells on short-term mission trips in the context of Cypress Baptist Church. The delimitation is that Cypress is a growing church, but there is still an

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<sup>44</sup>Aubrey Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning: A 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Model for Church and Ministry Leaders* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), 155.

<sup>45</sup>Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning*, 155.

overwhelming majority not committing to short-term missions through Cypress. There are benefits to a short-term mission trip, but many Cypress members do not know the benefits. Priest writes, "Intercultural congregation-to-congregation partnerships potentially can result in many beneficial outcomes."<sup>46</sup> One of the main reasons Cypress is a growing church is that the people are sharing the gospel and inviting the unchurched community to Cypress. Cypress members are going outside the comfort zone where delimitation begins. This project takes a look at one ministry. The project will have a broad view from many age groups, but when it comes to sharing the gospel and being missional, it will only look at one ministry under missions and outreach, which is short-term mission trips. As Priest writes, "Short-term programs become apprenticeship rather than field trips, training opportunities more than holiday outlets."<sup>47</sup>

This project will also have a controlled group. The controlled group will have been on short-term mission trips, especially those who have been several times. The non-controlled groups will consist of age divided adult groups who have not been on a short-term mission trip with Cypress. Most trips allow members as young as teenagers to senior adults. Having different age group participants will help get results from various age ranges, but it will not be from the full church membership. Short-term mission trips are a continuing ministry at Cypress in discipling members, and these groups will enhance the ministry at Cypress as it grows.

### **Thesis Statement**

The purpose and focus of this thesis project are to study why many members of Cypress are not committing to a week to eleven days to attend a short-term mission trip to share the gospel and further the establishment of the church. The thesis project is also about finding the

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<sup>46</sup>Priest, *Effective Engagement in Short-term Missions*, 209.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., 38.

answers to why some choose to go and to present those reasons to the non-participants to help them understand why they should choose to go. Priest writes, "The destination is not a blank slate. Christians probably exist there."<sup>48</sup> The hypothesis from this project is that many do not sacrifice to short term mission trips because North Bossier's culture—the location of Cypress—does not encourage the sacrifice of material goods and time to the gain of another. As more information from the questionnaires and interviews, Cypress will hopefully see why more members are not signing up for their first mission trip. The knowledge gained from the data gathered will help change the ministry of short-term missions at Cypress in many ways. Cypress will also have more concise training in place for short-term mission trips due to the project's knowledge. Also, as the study continues, it will help gain wisdom on the impact short-term mission trips have on the life choices of the individuals who go. The people involved in this project's future will help gain an understanding to answer the questions formed in this thesis statement. The consensus will be excitement on who and where people will serve next instead of the fear of not going and serving for various reasons. Priest writes, "Though effort and results are not always equal, STM provides an investment in people's lives through which God uses exposure, discipleship, and teaching for His higher purposes."<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>Priest, *Effective Engagement in Short-term Missions*, 123.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., 124.

## Chapter 2

### Conceptual Framework

#### Literature Review

The Literature Review will compare many sources around the subject of short-term mission trips on why people go, why some do not go, and how short-term mission trips can be improved. The questions raise these two points: (1) are short-term mission trips useful, and (2) if they are, how can they be done correctly for lasting change in the lives of all those involved? With proper recruiting, leadership, discipleship, equipping, and a heart for God's mission, short-term mission trips can be fruitful, but they can bring life change for the sending and the host countries. Roxburgh and Romanuk say, "It takes courage to do the right thing when it is neither easy nor comfortable and to accept the personal consequences of leading people out of familiar habits and patterns toward an alternative future."<sup>50</sup> This review will explore short-term mission trips by researching those who have already written on the same subject.

#### Lasting Change

Short-term mission trips can have a lasting effect on mission teams if correctly organized, and if Cypress can see this vision, it will hopefully encourage more to sign-up for Cypress trips. LiErin Probasco<sup>51</sup> studies the effects short-term mission trips have on participants once they return, as 1/3 of all U.S. evangelical churches send mission teams every year. This journal does say there has not been enough time to go beyond a few years to know how lasting the change will be. There may be an immediate change of participants like giving time and money once

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<sup>50</sup>Alan Roxburgh and Fred Romanuk, *The Missional Leader: Equipping Your Church to Reach a Changing World* (San Francisco, CA: Josey-Bass, 2006), 137.

<sup>51</sup>LiErin Probasco, "Giving Time, Not Money: Log-term Impacts of Short-term Mission Trips," *Missiology: An International Review*, vol. 41. iss. 2 (2013).

returning. However, the research does not show a lasting change of choices within individuals over long periods. In studying the literature, this seems to be where the gap lies in having research of participants over periods of 5-10 years. This study relates to the topic because if Christians would see a trip brings lifelong change, it then allows a lens for others to see the need to go. Part of why it is not seen for individuals to go on short-term mission trips is they think it will not make a lasting impact on their lives. Probasco's<sup>52</sup> research continues with findings that mission trip travelers return and give less to organizations with no religious affiliation. Laurie Occhipinti<sup>53</sup> discusses this same argument that mission trips need to become pilgrimages. Occhipinti's points out that change needs to come from within the individual based on serving and giving. Pilgrimages become more about the people served than the individual. Both Probasco and Occhipinti compel the missionary to view the trip in light of relationships, with those of the host country and not self-transformation. The problem comes with tourism, fun excursions, which added to the trip becomes about consuming instead of giving. Motivation becomes a primary understanding of what will happen on the mission field and behavior once returned from the mission field. The study of these two authors helps to try and understand the motivation to go of all participants.

The question raised: (1) are people willing to sacrifice time and money for the gospel to go to other nations, and (2) are they willing to go for the right reasons? Both of these articles are relevant to bringing to light the argument for short-term mission trips. The North Bossier culture

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<sup>52</sup>Probasco, *Giving Time*.

<sup>53</sup>Laurie Occhipinti, "Not Just Tourist: Short-term Missionaries and Volunteerism." *Human Organization*, vol. 75. iss. 3 (2016).

has a strong leaning to meet one's needs above the sacrifice of going to those on the other side of the world.

Do short-term mission trip participants experience real change from participating in trips? There are a couple of valid arguments brought out by Simone Twibell.<sup>54</sup> when it comes to the study of lasting change within individuals who participate in short-term mission trips. The point raised that change does happen early upon returning, but it does not last. This is relevant to this project because people will not participate in short-term mission trips if it does not produce change. The financial aspect is a huge factor in this process. The project looks at the change from individuals going because this can be a decisive factor in deciding to go. Steven Curtis<sup>55</sup> writes in his dissertation that the lack of change can come from an improper understanding of the trip's purpose. Curtis highlights that many go on short-term mission trips more for a sense of self-serving than for a transformation in the people that visited and served. As Curtis writes, when a person who has material things visits a country with lots of poverty, it can open the missionary's eyes. However, too often, the change is temporary once the participant returns to everyday life back at home. So, the transformation is short-lived, and the missionary does not help change in the host country because there was too much focus on inner change. The comparison between Twibell and Curtis reveals that if a lasting change occurs in short-term mission trips, the change needs to begin before the actual trip occurs. This fact needs to come from the training for teams before and especially after they return.

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<sup>54</sup>Simone Mulieri Twibell, "Integrated Partnerships: A Case Study of the Dynamics and Impact of Reverse Short-Term Missions" (A Dissertation, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 2019).

<sup>55</sup>Steven Curtis, "Educate to Equip: A Model for Educational Short-Term Missions as a Ministry of the Local Church" (A Dissertation, Liberty University, 2013).

Understanding purpose is a crucial fact in even committing to a short-term mission trip. Occhipinti<sup>56</sup> says the focus will become so inward the only reason there is a commitment to the short-term mission trip is the change for the person going and not change for the community's individuals. The change will come, but how is it being achieved? Communication of this fact needs to be done correctly because of the culture surrounding Cypress members. Sarah Bunyea<sup>57</sup> writes critically of how churches and mission organizations advertise their trips to those interested in going. Advertising can go too far one way or the other. The organization in doing the recruitment can either highlight the fun of the trip for the consumer or make the people being served look worse than they are. Bunyea encourages that instead of convincing people to go, it should be a "missionary call"<sup>58</sup> to serve on the mission field; in other words, only give the facts and let that influence them. Fayeze Adeeb Ayoub<sup>59</sup> highlights this further with his reference to Matthew 28:19<sup>60</sup> and Luke 24:47<sup>61</sup>, directly linking Jesus' command to go the nations. Nations are explicitly referring to "people groups."<sup>62</sup> So, in retrospect, short-term mission trips become about sharing the gospel in meeting the needs of those visited rather than transforming of

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<sup>56</sup>Occhipinti, *Not Just Tourist*.

<sup>57</sup>Sarah Bunyea, "A Critical Perspective on Short-term Missions" (Senior Thesis, Liberty University, 2015).

<sup>58</sup>*Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>59</sup>Fayeze Adeeb Ayoub, "Using Short-term Mission Trips in the U.S. to Reach Unreached People Groups," (A Major Project, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 2017).

<sup>60</sup>Matt. 28:19 (NASB).

<sup>61</sup>Luke 24:47 (NASB).

<sup>62</sup>*Ibid.*, 30.



oneself. The points on recruitment and how to advertise are beneficial in understanding the purpose and presentation for a trip for all who could potentially participate in a particular trip.

### Time and Resources

In this review, the discussion leads toward the value of short-term mission trips for the individuals who go: is the time and resources spent worth it? Short-term mission trips are about Cypress's people and their willingness to do what it takes to go on a trip. The assumption is that some do not go because they do not have the time or resources. Kurt Alan Ver Beek<sup>63</sup> compares proponents and critics in this debate of whether churches should send or not. Ver Beek's study is on whether short-term mission trips are worth the investment over a long period. Some critics argue that short-term mission trips do not have enough value because of the lack of cultural understanding, making the participants insensitive to the indigenous people. On the other side, some say short-term mission participants make a lasting change by meeting the gospel's needs at the forefront. Ver Beek even points out that just sending money was not a good idea because the result was to see lasting change in the travelers on the trip through relationships. The most significant point he discusses in this article is "missed opportunities."<sup>64</sup> The study is not if the participants built the house or the host country, but about building the house together. Both parties, the missionaries and the host need to have shared responsibilities. The argument being missed by many is that relationships are what make lasting change. Both parties have something to offer, and when both see this, the change will happen. Ver Beek references, giving people think if they give only resources, it will make a difference. Ver Beek is more concerned with

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<sup>63</sup>Kurt Alan Ver Beek, "The Impact of Short-Term Missions: A Case Study of House Construction in Honduras After Hurricane Mitch," *Missiology: An International Review*, vol. 34, no. 4 (2006).

<sup>64</sup>*Ibid.*, 481.

building relationships with the communities visited to help them become receptive to the gospel. The communication that short-term mission trips are about relationships can encourage more to go.

As the number of short-term mission trips from Cypress continues to increase from year to year, the host countries' expectations will vary based on need from year to year. A team can be preparing to go and serve in a community by raising the financial needs necessary to do the work. However, the host country may have a different plan of raising funds to do an actual project that will cost additional money on top of what it took to get the individuals to the host country. Edwin Zehner<sup>65</sup> writes about this in his journal article, referencing that the host people could not construct houses without these funds or the teams that build the houses. The finances to do the project expected are only a small part of the trip. The purpose of the trip is about the participants working alongside the indigenous people and building relationships. Trust in God to send the right people to the team is essential. Yes, recruiting is essential, but when the team forms, it is time to trust God He has sent the right people to do the work put before them. Cypress needs to see the purpose of using their gifts for the nations. As Zehner continues to write around this subject, there is a perspective on dependency. Is there dependency from the host church or ministry on the Americans coming to build these houses? Does it enhance their ministry in the host country? These are questions that need answering for the individuals who choose to go. Participants understanding the purpose of going to a particular country allows them to understand why they are going. Alberta Ama Ayee<sup>66</sup> says there are benefits to all participants

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<sup>65</sup>Edwin Zehner, "Short-Term Missions: Some Perspectives from Thailand," *Missiology, An International Review*, vol. 41, no. 2 (2013).

<sup>66</sup>Alberta Ama Ayee, "Cross-Cultural Competence as a Communicative Process: The Short-Term Missions Challenge" (Dissertation, Regent University, 2013).

of short-term mission trips. She continues, "These include hands-on mission experience; interest in and possible signing on for long-term missionary work; increased prayer and financial support for missions, and commitment to world missions."<sup>67</sup> The bottom line emphasized here is that a participant cannot help but grow from the experience done effectively. As both Zehner and Ayee reflect, the sacrifice of time and resources allow a positive change in both the host country and the participants. Not having this knowledge is why many choose not to go.

### Missional

Missional living attracts other Christians to live a life that attracts others into a life of ministry. The problem lies with seeing the value of missional living outside of Cypress' community. Robert Priest<sup>68</sup> says the church needs not only to be missional but live out the very essence of being missional. Priest refers to reliance on the Holy Spirit as the believer walks with Christ daily. Jim, Judy, and James Raymo<sup>69</sup> write about a leader as the leader prepares to lead a short-term mission trip. The Raymo's say the trip itself and how a team prepares comes back to the leader. Proper leadership and training allow the person to understand missional living that will allow the participants to influence the communities visited. Priest is specific in saying one must rely on the Holy Spirit over resources. Alan Roxburgh and Fred Romanuk<sup>70</sup> refer to the congregation, the church, that there must be an outpouring of the Holy Spirit as God calls them to lead others to Jesus. This is an indicator of why some do not go. In their book, the point made

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<sup>67</sup>Ayee, "Cross Cultural Competence," 67.

<sup>68</sup> Robert J. Priest, *Effective Engagement in Short-Term Missions: Doing It Right!* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Publishing, 2008).

<sup>69</sup>Jim Raymo, Judy Raymo, and James Raymo, *Millennials, and Mission: A Generation Faces a Global Challenge* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Publishing, 2014).

<sup>70</sup>Roxburgh and Romanuk, *The Missional Leader*.

is that the Holy Spirit is what makes the team one unit. As these resources point out, a leader must penetrate the congregation with Cypress missions' vision, so there will be more buy-in to see more participation.

The term missional in light of short-term missions can create tension and be a word that, for some, does not go with missions in general. Andrea Rolden<sup>71</sup> describes missional in a way that reflects on the life of Jesus in His empowerment of creating missional individuals. As Rolden says, Jesus modeled missional behavior, and as He modeled this living out a missional lifestyle, He surrounded Himself with His disciples. The connection between the leader and participants as they are trained and discipled for short-term mission trips can make a massive difference in the trip's success. Chad Hunsberger<sup>72</sup> in his dissertation writes specifically about short-term mission trips with the local sending church and their connection internationally. Just as Rolden<sup>73</sup> points out in being missional, Hunsberger says for significant relationships to happen between the short-term missionary and the host country, there must be multiple trips over years of building relationships. Multiple trips bring an understanding of missional as the foundation of stronger relationships build over multiple visits. The model will come from both the team leader and the leader in the host country. Many choose not to go because they do not see the relationships built by those that live thousands of miles away. Hunsberger writes by going on a short-term mission trip; one can learn what the commission is from Jesus, as He stated in Matthew 28:29-20. The point is that a person learns best by being with someone. Just as the

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<sup>71</sup>Andrea Rolden, "Mentorship and Discipleship of OMF Short-Term Mission Volunteers as With-ness and Consociation," *Transformation: An International Journal of Holistic Mission Studies*, vol. 35, no. 3 (2018).

<sup>72</sup>Chad Timothy Hunsberger, "Launching a Strategic Missional Partnership Between Park Place Baptist Church, Pearl, Mississippi, and Neuve Pacto Baptist Church, Tegucigalpa, Honduras" (Doctoral Thesis, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2014).

<sup>73</sup>Ibid.

disciples learned missional living, so does a mission participant learn missional living by coming alongside the leader who has a deep understanding of missions.

### Leadership in Planning

Often, teams lose focus on the host people and do not realize the effect they have on them, even after they have left. Yoon Jung Lee<sup>74</sup> points to this with some interesting discussion on the effect's teams have on the people served on short-term missions. Many teams leave to go to another country to serve without understanding and training. A lack of leadership and planning within Cypress's core is why some are choosing not to go. Teaching on culture must come from the team leader. Furthermore, many participants expect to accomplish something with short-term mission trips, something being a house or church built. Lee is stressing when a participant focuses on the task alone; the participant forgets about the relationships. This kind of focus will cause the loss of relationships, leading to a loss of effectiveness in sharing the gospel. The problem arises on the leader who has not done his or her homework to prepare a team. Eric Carpenter<sup>75</sup> reminds the leader, not the participant, of the mission trip to be aware of every decision made while on the mission. These decisions begin in preparation long before the actual trip starts. Roxburgh and Romanuk<sup>76</sup> speak directly to the leader of the intelligence of being aware of whom they are leading and what preparation is needed based on the team. Paul writes in Ephesians 4:12 about the leaders "equipping the saints." The knowledge of being aware of team make-up, host country, expectations of teams in the host country, and participants' spiritual gifts

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<sup>74</sup>Yoon Jung Lee, "Mission Travelers: Relationship-building and Cross-cultural Adaptation" (Doctoral Thesis, Texas A & M University, 2011).

<sup>75</sup>Eric Carpenter, "The Effect Participation on a Short-term Mission Trip at Christ Community Church as on Increasing Missional Engagement" (Alliance Theological Seminary, ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2019).

<sup>76</sup>Roxburgh and Romanuk, *The Missional Leader*.

will be beneficial as this thesis project continues. The self-awareness of the leader will help in recruiting, training, and on the field experiences. The leader's attentiveness to all of this helps to have better conversations to woo others to go.

When planning a short-term mission trip, the leader becomes an example to the team. When the trip happens, the leader must be aware of their actions throughout the trip, knowing they are the team's example. William R. McCartney<sup>77</sup> references that the actual goal for the trip is to see more come to know Christ. The way to do this is through servant leadership. The gospel needs to be front and center to the mission to hopefully help others want to go. Many are not going because of the fear of sharing the gospel. McCartney's emphasis is on the relationship between the leader and the participants. Participants in trips do not always understand the emphasis of a particular trip, and the leader must be mindful in planning as the team prepares to go. Roxburgh and Romanuk come back to this with a view on character within the leader.<sup>78</sup> A good virtue of character is where the leader is self-aware of his or her dependence on Jesus. Tell someone to be a servant leader is easy, but it is better to model servant leadership, so others have the right perspective to model. Roxburgh and Romanuk say a leader need two things, "being authentic, and being self-aware."<sup>79</sup> Leadership is key to short-term mission trips, and the self-awareness of the team leader increases the ability to reveal to the Cypress members why they should go to the nations. As the leader prepares personally correctly, it will transcend to the team and create an atmosphere of all ready to serve.

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<sup>77</sup>William R. McCartney, "Analyzing Correlations Between Service Quality Gospel Receptivity Among Recipients of Short-Term Mission Projects" (Doctoral Thesis, Dallas Baptist Theological Seminary, 2019).

<sup>78</sup>Ibid.

<sup>79</sup>Roxburgh and Romanuk, *The Missional Leader*, 127.

## Discipleship

J.D. Greear writes discipleship will multiply missions.<sup>80</sup> In other words, the more people are discipled in the Bible; the more one becomes missional. Discipleship allows for transformation. James K. A. Smith says discipleship is not more knowledge, but it is a change in the individual's heart to have a heart understanding of God.<sup>81</sup> Greear compounds on this with the point as disciple-makers—believers in Christ—will want to go to those who are unreached. The unreached are those who have either never heard the gospel or those who have heard and rejected the gospel. Matthew 9:36 references Jesus' deep "compassion" for those who are hurting. Greear says we need to be more concerned about where disciples go than if they stay. Greear emphasizes that the church needs to worry less about getting more numbers on Sunday and be more concerned about how many are going to the mission field. Greear is saying as the church equips people for ministry, then more people will engage in ministry.

Discipleship will bring change. Emily Katherine McDonald<sup>82</sup> argues in her dissertation that many will invest time and money into a particular trip only to return to the consumerism of the culture they left, causing the individual to forget soon the change that briefly took place. To change this mindset, the short-term mission trip leader will need to have the training to help the participants understand that change can happen as participants return from the field on a short-term mission trip. When Emily Katherine McDonald studies Root, she suggests that mission trips need to become more about being with the people in relationships. Doing over serving in

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<sup>80</sup>Greear, *Gaining by Losing*.

<sup>81</sup>James K.A. Smith, *You Are What You Love: The Spiritual Power of Habit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2016).

<sup>82</sup>Emily Katherine McDonald, "Perceptions of the 'Less Fortunate: An Exploratory Study of Short-term Mission Trips" (ProQuest Dissertation, Southeastern Louisiana University, 2015).

relationships seems to be a critical point that keeps coming up from different literature studied. Relationships are a critical part of short-term missions. Katherine continues with the point that participants leave their home country with improper assumptions. The mindset is more about individual change than how the team can best help the host country. Occhipinti<sup>83</sup> argues this crucial point in her article too. How the team can become more educated in the country's culture is never answered or even attempted. If the call here is, and it is, to be as Jesus would be, then the team must enter into the lives of the people serving. The team working as one using their gifts for the team enhances the relationships to share the gospel and build on the church. Greear, Roxburgh, and Romanuk challenge this for the leader to disciple the team from the beginning for the outcome to be as God would want it. Cypress needs discipling in short-term missions to see God's heart to go to the nations.

Root<sup>84</sup>, in his journal, writes to bring lasting change in relationship with the host country; the serving team needs to engulf itself in its culture. There needs to be living with and suffering with the people. The Cypress members who continue to go can engage in culture to bring about lasting relationships. The assumption is that there is an intent to see another culture versus engaging a culture to bring a change through the gospel and the church. The mindset now is about relationships with investment in the indigenous people. Root is pointing to the Bible through his writing by first knowing who God is. God is the God of all nations. When a team surrounds itself in the culture by being with the people, life change begins with an experience

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<sup>83</sup>Occhipinti, "Not Just Tourist."

<sup>84</sup>Andrew, Root, "The Youth Ministry Mission Trip as Global Tourism: Are We OK with That?" *A Journal of Theology*, vol. 47, iss. no. 4 (2008).



that will last a lifetime. As Root says, "a mission trip that breaks the tourist cycle focuses on who God is and what God does."<sup>85</sup>

### Global Connection

The Missions Pastor has a responsibility to educate the people of Cypress on the "why" of short-term missions. What is the vision, and then how can there be buy-in to the vision? Stephen Offutt<sup>86</sup> offers information on this subject. Offutt says short-term mission trips are one of the best ways to connect people globally. Offutt discusses a missions' director, Hilda Bojorquez, where Bojorquez says there must be receiving on both sides. The American culture loves receiving but does not always like to give. The accepting of the relationship between the short-term mission team and the host country is where sincere trust comes into play, and this is where actual change takes place. David Livermore and Paul Borthwick<sup>87</sup> relate the topic of relationships in view of giving and receiving to the life of Jesus. Jesus was intentional when it came to giving Himself to others, but Jesus never forgot about people; in fact, He always allowed people of all ages and races to interrupt Him so He could be intentional in meeting their needs. In Matthew 19:13-14<sup>88</sup>, the disciples rebuke Jesus for receiving the children. Jesus' rebuke of His disciples on this situation communicates the Kingdom is for everybody. He taught His followers to trust the Holy Spirit. John 14<sup>89</sup> is a reminder that the Holy Spirit is there to guide all believers

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<sup>85</sup>Root, *The Youth Ministry Mission*, 381.

<sup>86</sup>Stephen Offutt, "The Role of Short-term Mission Teams in the New Centers of Global Christianity," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, vol. 50. iss. 4, (2011).

<sup>87</sup>David A. Livermore and Paul Borthwick, *Serving with Eyes Wide Open: Doing Short-Term Missions with Cultural Intelligence* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2013).

<sup>88</sup>Matt. 19:13-14 (NASB).

<sup>89</sup>John 14 (NASB).

every step of the way. Priest<sup>90</sup> brings this to light with his discussion on the global community. The global community transcends the church, not in isolation, but as a body that is part of a global community as a whole. Priest uses the word "social capital."<sup>91</sup> Simply stated, people who belong to churches have more connections in relationships than those who do not. As the church becomes connected globally, the church members, in turn, become more connected globally. The global community idea transcends short-term mission trips because, for Cypress people to commit to short-term mission trips, there need to be deep reasons to sacrifice for the church at large. The realization that the sacrifice will connect people globally through the gospel and the church should lead more to go.

Gospel is the thread throughout the Bible and is the heart behind short-term missions as far as this review is concerned. Richard Stearns, in his book, writes a strong directive for the "whole gospel."<sup>92</sup> Just to know that the church is globally connected is not enough. Stearns is calling the church to use that connection to make a lasting difference at home and around the world with one's means to give to the world for the gospel. Within his book, he quotes a speech from Bono<sup>93</sup>, the leader of the band U2. Bono's call resounds with a simple understanding that Western culture at least often misses because Western culture is wealthier than many other nations, and it is not for one's use but to help others around the world. The call to know that all people group is named is equal. Equality is global period. Cypress knows this, but the problem comes with living this out. When a person lives in a community that promotes consumption over

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<sup>90</sup>Priest, *Effective Engagement in Short-term Missions*.

<sup>91</sup>Ibid., 290.

<sup>92</sup>Stearns, *The Hole in Our Gospel*, 60.

<sup>93</sup>Ibid.

giving, it is hard to see the other side of the story that many live without many essential needs, and there is a desire for someone to bring a story of hope and change. All believers are gifted spiritually, and all have something to offer on a short-term mission trip, no matter the location or the trip. The actual gospel is for everybody. The gospel message seems more comfortable to share with those more like us than those across the world. The call for a short-term mission is to leave one's comfort zone in all areas. M. David Sills<sup>94</sup> references the hindrance of giving up stuff. The idea that one cannot go on a mission trip because the sacrifice will keep one from having more things in the home is a hindrance. The gospel always needs to supersede the desire to meet a want. Barclay writes, "To take up our cross means to be prepared to face things like that for loyalty to Jesus; it means to be ready to endure the worst that anyone can do to us for the sake of being true to him."<sup>95</sup>

### Gifts

The discussion on short-term missions continues through the lens of discipleship and leadership with gifts in mind. If Cypress knew their gifts—or at least knew there are gifts within them—they would be more apt to serve in short-term missions. Many do not think they have anything to offer. William McCartney<sup>96</sup> writes that a trip should not build around the work project, but instead, as the team forms, the leader can use each team member's gifts to do the work. The team leader takes the mindset of inspiring each team member to bring something that will ultimately glorify God. The question often asked of the Mission's Pastor is, does the

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<sup>94</sup>M. David Sills, *The Missionary Call: Find Your Place in God's Plan for the World* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 2008).

<sup>95</sup>William Barclay, *The Gospel of Luke* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 144.

<sup>96</sup>McCartney, *Analyzing Correlations*.

individual have anything to offer? The answer is always a resounding yes. Every member has something to offer to every team. In 1 Corinthians 10:31, Paul says, "do all for the glory of God."<sup>97</sup> In following this passage, McCartney states with the right leadership, everybody brings something to the table that can and will be excellent. Going back to what Stearns is saying in his book if the "whole gospel"<sup>98</sup> is shared, then every gift must be used, so the team can indeed be Jesus by meeting the needs. Cypress's short-term missions motivate people to use everything everyone brings to the team to share Jesus with everybody. Christopher Einoff<sup>99</sup> brings the whole concept together within his journal article. Proper leadership motivates people. When the pastor and pastoral staff cast a vision for short-term missions, the church can then begin to have something to follow. Einoff speaks specifically about the story of the Good Samaritan. When this parable is taught and owned by the church—the receiving of someone no matter where they come from—the understanding of the heart of Jesus becomes even more real. The equipping of the people to do God's work by knowing the Bible is essential in using their gifts.

The argument here continues in the discussion of gifts; for God's love to altogether transcend to the nations, everybody must use their gifts. Sherron George<sup>100</sup> references the book of Ephesians in several places culminating in chapter 4 with the theme of reaching just one person with the gospel of salvation. George points out that the church in Ephesus was central in becoming a church that sent out missionaries for the gospel and the planting of churches. As the

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<sup>97</sup>1 Cor. 10:31 (NASB).

<sup>98</sup>Stearns, *The Hole in Our Gospel*.

<sup>99</sup>Christopher J. Einoff, "The Link Between Religion and Helping Others: The Role of Values, Ideas, and Language," *Sociology of Religion*, vol. 72, iss. 4 (2011).

<sup>100</sup>Sherron George, "God's Holistic Mission: Fullness of Parts, Participants and Places," *Missiology, An International Review*, vol. 41, iss. 3 (2013).

sending church, it became evident that missions are never alone because a church sent the individual or teams out in support that includes finances, love, and support through prayer and other means. The expectation is for the whole church to function as one unit. Sherron George talks about the word "holistic."<sup>101</sup> The holistic approach of the sending church is to see those going out and ensure all gifts work within the team dynamic. The church as a whole is supposed to operate to bring support in all areas: prayer, financial, and sending others to come alongside in support. All gifts used help the gospel transcend to all those involved. Paul McGuinness<sup>102</sup> continues this thought in his book in his comparison to 1 Corinthians 12<sup>103</sup>. The comparison here in this passage is about the human body. Just as the body operates as a unit, so is the church. Each person has a different gift, and each gift plays a part. Ephesians 4 reminds the church leaders to equip all members to "do the work of the ministry." The holistic approach, as Sherron writes, is the goal of missions and ministry is for all believers. 1 Peter 2<sup>104</sup> reminds the church that they are all called for a purpose. The spiritual gift is within each believer to do the ministry God has equipped them to do through the Holy Spirit's infilling in all believers. Romans 12<sup>105</sup> brings back full circle, reminding the body of Christ; there is one body, but all are gifted. When Cypress members realize this call, they can then surrender to serve on a short-term mission trip and allow the Holy Spirit to use them with their gift.

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<sup>101</sup>George, "God's Holistic Mission," 287.

<sup>102</sup>McGuinness, *Walk this Way*.

<sup>103</sup>1 Cor. 12 (NASB).

<sup>104</sup>1 Pet. 2 (NASB).

<sup>105</sup>Rom. 12 (NASB).

## Conclusion

In the conclusion of the "Review of Literature," short-term mission trips can have several impacts on the community visited and the individuals deciding to go. This review has illustrated why all should go, but there is still why many choose not to go. The believer chooses not to go because of a lack of education on the importance of missions. The believer chooses not to go because the Christian does not understand God's ultimate heart for the nations. Cypress's job is to train and equip believers to go to the nations. This project, through the Literature Review, has looked at several different writings on short-term mission trips but emphasize they must be done correctly in order for them to be effective. The effectiveness of the trips will encourage more to go to the nations. Priest writes, "STMT's purpose is to announce God's Kingdom through brief trips with specific ministerial activities."<sup>106</sup> The call from God is to go to the nations. The gap lies in the sending church and the preparation. Ultimately, there needs to be a willingness to go based on a vision cast from Cypress pastors to see the nations reached. The question is why some choose to go and why many choose not to go needs answering. Stearns<sup>107</sup> says the call of God is an all or nothing to follow Him at all costs. George writes, "God's mission is local, cosmic, and ecumenical because the church started in Jerusalem and expanded through Asia Minor and is now a global church doing mission in six continents."<sup>108</sup>

## Theological Foundations

There is a theological foundation throughout the whole Bible for missions. God's heart desire is for the world to know Him in an eternal relationship. One cannot study whom God is

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<sup>106</sup>Priest, *Effective Engagement*, 278.

<sup>107</sup>Stearns, *The Hole in Our Gospel*.

<sup>108</sup>George, *God's Holistic Mission*. 287.

without understanding that God has called all believers to share His salvation message. Matthew 28:18-19<sup>109</sup> and Acts 1:8<sup>110</sup> are poignant scriptures that point to missions as the church is to go beyond its walls to share the gospel message. The command in Matthew 28 is to "go to the nations," which is the underlying principle of short-term missions at Cypress. Acts 1:8 reference where to go beginning at home and stretching to the world. Both of these passages highlight this in the theological section of the thesis project. Missions is an act of worship for telling the good news of grace and salvation to those who have not heard. A.B. Simpson writes on missions, "One of these is the great task of working and praying and sacrificing for the immediate evangelization of the world. This is not merely a duty. It is the supreme task of every Christian."<sup>111</sup> The ministry of short-term missions is the ministry of Cypress's used to go to the nations to share the good news.

#### Abraham

In beginning a discussion on missions, it is good to begin a discussion on Abraham in the book of Genesis. In Genesis 12<sup>112</sup>, God gives His command to Abraham to rise and go "to a land God will show him." The question of where he is to go is not said, but there is a command to follow God. God's proclamation to Abraham was: (1) an act of faith and obedience to follow, and (2) a purpose in making God famous among the nations by Abraham's obedience. John H. Sailhamer writes on Genesis 12:1, "The author intended to picture Abraham's call as God's gift

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<sup>109</sup>Matt. 28:19-20 (NASB).

<sup>110</sup>Acts 1:8 (NASB).

<sup>111</sup>A.B. Simpson, *Missionary Messages* (Camp Hill, PA: Christian Publications, 1987), 4.

<sup>112</sup>Gen. 12 (NASB).

of salvation in the midst of judgment."<sup>113</sup> The church was not here during Abraham's life, and God is already calling His people to go and share His truth. Abraham became the living example for all to follow because his life is a picture of salvation. In their commentary, Gerhard Von Rad and John H. Marks write, "The divine address begins with the command to abandon radically all-natural roots."<sup>114</sup> When one decides to abandon the everyday life of existence to follow Christ, it takes obedience to go wherever God says to go or do. The North Bossier community has a culture of serving one's self before sacrifice. Von Rad and Marks write, "Abraham is simply to leave everything behind and entrust himself to God's guidance."<sup>115</sup> The Lord used this call on Abraham's life as an example for all to follow. Abraham's act of obedience and faith is the same call for Cypress in the ministry of short-term missions.

The example of Abraham weaves itself through more of Genesis to the book of Romans and Hebrews 11<sup>116</sup>. In Genesis 15<sup>117</sup>, God shows Abraham the land promised to his descendants. Not only does he see the land, but God makes a covenant with Abraham on that day. In Genesis 17<sup>118</sup>, God changes Abram's name to Abraham, and with the covenant, he is "the father of a multitude of nations." Genesis 12, 15, and 17 all lead to the description of Abraham's faithfulness and obedience in Hebrew 11, where it says he is a man of great faith. Luke Timothy Johnson writes of Abraham in Hebrews, "Now the author celebrates the character of Abraham's response

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<sup>113</sup>John H. Sailhamer, *Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers*. 2 vol. The Expositor's Bible Commentary. ed. by Frank Gaebelein (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1990), 111.

<sup>114</sup>Gerhard Von Rad and John H. Marks, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Westminster Press, 1972), 158.

<sup>115</sup>Von Rad and Marks, *Genesis*, 158.

<sup>116</sup>Heb. 11 (NASB).

<sup>117</sup>Gen.15 (NASB).

<sup>118</sup>Gen. 17 (NASB).



to God and how he serves as a model."<sup>119</sup> Genesis 12<sup>120</sup> points to the willingness of Abraham to obey God more than anything. Johnson goes on to write of Abraham, "His faith, therefore, serves as a 'proof of things not seen,' since he acted on the promise as though it were actually present."<sup>121</sup> Abraham's *yes* amounts to more than just an act of obedience, but his *yes* is based on God's relationship with Abraham. The core of short-term missions at Cypress is for the members to live out of a relationship with Christ of faith and obedience in serving Him. Romans 4:3 says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."<sup>122</sup> The word *believes* sums up the whole of Abraham's relationship with God. Abraham believed God's promise, the promise of more descendants than he could ever imagine. Abraham had salvation in God because of his relationship. In his belief in God, he knew God's way is much bigger than his own, and so his act of faith in the relationship is what made him righteous. Abraham's story, which begins in Genesis and traces itself through the New Testament through the writings of the New Testament writers, sets a foundation for the church's beginning. Just as Abraham said *yes*, so should the church say *yes* because of the covenant God has made through Jesus for the believer. When Jesus was crucified on the cross in John 19 and then defeated death by rising from the grave and defeating sin, He made way for all to come to God through Jesus. When a believer comes into a relationship with God, there is now a call to follow in obedience. Jesus made this covenant.

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<sup>119</sup>Luke Timothy Johnson, *Hebrews: A Commentary*. The New Testament Library. ed. by C. Clifton Black, M. Eugen Boring, and John T. Carroll (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 286.

<sup>120</sup>Gen. 12 (NASB).

<sup>121</sup>*Ibid.*, 289.

<sup>122</sup>Rom. 4:3 (NASB).

David Platt writes, "But where in the Bible is missions ever identified as an optional program in the church?"<sup>123</sup>

### Jonah the Prophet

The story begins with a pretty simple call for Jonah in Jonah 1:1-2<sup>124</sup> to go to Nineveh and preach repentance to the Ninevites. The principle and example here are God calls His people to go to places outside their local community. God called Jonah to go to Nineveh—present-day Spain—but he ran to Tarsus. Jonah 1:2 calls Nineveh a wicked city. John D. Barry writes, "In the Bible, Nineveh came to be used as a paradigmatic example of evil."<sup>125</sup> Barry writes, "The Bible frames Nineveh as a thoroughly evil city and enemy of Israel."<sup>126</sup> Jonah boarded a ship headed to Tarsus, running from God from this evil city that he felt did not deserve repentance.

H.L. Ellison writes, "In a culture in which correct procedure in the service of the gods was essential, [the Ninevites] had not merely to do the will of Yahweh but also to do it correctly."<sup>127</sup> Jonah, the prophet, was not submitting to the will of God for his personal life. Ellison writes, "Here was a God's servant who had fallen out of the will of the Lord."<sup>128</sup> After the sailors throw Jonah from the boat headed to Tarsus during a storm, Jonah 1:17<sup>129</sup> says a fish swallowed him whole. As he was in the fish's belly for three days, he began to cry out to God.

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<sup>123</sup>David Platt, *Radical: Taking Back Your Faith from the American Dream* (Colorado Springs, CO: Multnomah Books, 2010), 72.

<sup>124</sup>Jon. 1:1-2 (NASB).

<sup>125</sup>John D. Barry, *The Lexham Dictionary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016), 333.

<sup>126</sup>*Ibid.*, 335.

<sup>127</sup>H.L. Ellison, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*. The New International Version. vol. 7. ed. by Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1985), 372.

<sup>128</sup>*Ibid.*, 102.

<sup>129</sup>Jonah 1:17 (NASB).

“Having experienced in his own life God's power to rescue him from the very jaws of death itself, Jonah, as an expression of his gratitude, promises to offer sacrifices and fulfill his vows to the Lord.”<sup>130</sup> Jonah, representing God, is the prophet to Nineveh. Henry M. Morris writes, “The Lord Jesus here acknowledged that Jonah has been a real prophet and that his experience had indeed been a 'sign,' or miracle.”<sup>131</sup>

Jonah, chapter two<sup>132</sup>, begins with Jonah's prayer in the belly of the fish for repentance. Jonah is asking God to send him to Nineveh still. In the middle of everything, God still wants to send Jonah to Nineveh. Paul Mackrell writes, “The important point here is not so much Jonah's commitment to the Lord but the Lord's commitment to Jonah.”<sup>133</sup> In Jonah 2:10<sup>134</sup>, the fish vomited Jonah out, and he was released from the fish and was able to go to Nineveh to preach repentance. He went through the whole city preaching repentance over three days, and when word reached the king, he called for repentance for the whole city of Nineveh. God spared the city of Nineveh with the obedience of a man who spent three days in a city telling them to repent. In his commentary, Desmond Alexander writes, “No outward show of piety will deliver Nineveh from her approaching destruction; only a radical transformation of heart and behavior offers any hope of a reprieve.”<sup>135</sup> Knowing the gospel is the hope for Nineveh, Jonah is an example of God

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<sup>130</sup>D.J. Wiseman, T.D. Alexander, & B.K. Waltke, *Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah: An Introduction and Commentary*. vol. 26 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 129

<sup>131</sup>Henry M. Morris, *The Remarkable Journey of Jonah: A Scholarly, Conservative Study of His Amazing Word* (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2003), 76.

<sup>132</sup>Jon. 2 (NASB).

<sup>133</sup>Paul Mackrell, *Opening up Jonah* (Leominster: Day One Publications, 2007), 6.

<sup>134</sup>Jon. 2:10 (NASB).

<sup>135</sup>David W. Baker, T. Desmond Alexander, and Bruce K. Waltke, *Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah: An Introduction and Commentary*. 26 vol. Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 120.

calling people today to go to the nations to tell the same message of repentance. As Mackrell writes, "Utterly unable to save himself, Jonah had come to see that from beginning to end, saving the perishing was God's unique work."<sup>136</sup> The fear of sharing the gospel with those from another culture is one reason many choose not to go. Jonah's story in this four-chapter book gives an example for others to follow.

### Jesus's Command to Go

In Matthew 28:19-20<sup>137</sup>, Jesus gives the disciples what is commonly called the "Great Commission." Jesus spent time with the disciples, intentional time. Jesus not only gave this command, but He also lived and modeled this in His ministry. In Matthew 28:18, Jesus addresses the disciples with the authority given to Him by His Father, God. Grant R. Osborne writes, "Jesus 'comes to' the disciples (probably from heaven) and begins first by establishing the basis for his command here, his absolute all-embracing authority as Risen Lord."<sup>138</sup> Osborne continues, "'Go' is the operative act, as now God's people are no longer to stay in Jerusalem and be a kind of 'show 'n tell' for the nations, but they are actively to go and take the message to the nations."<sup>139</sup> The basis is the authority given to go beyond their home and to the nations. Platt goes on to write, "Jesus mandates that all mission activity emulate his pattern of discipling followers as exemplified in this gospel."<sup>140</sup> The Biblical mandate here is to go, but not just go,

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<sup>136</sup>Mackrell, *Opening Up Jonah*, 64-65.

<sup>137</sup>Matt. 28:19-20 (NASB).

<sup>138</sup>Grant R. Osborne, *Matthew*. Zondervan Exegetical Commentary Series on the New Testament, Edited by Clinton E. Arnold (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 1156.

<sup>139</sup>*Ibid.*, 1157.

<sup>140</sup>Platt, *Radical*, 90.

but to make disciples. Robert Lewis and Wayne Cordeiro write, "One of the specific purposes of God for every church is in presenting the gospel aggressively."<sup>141</sup> The guiding principles or vision of short-term missions at Cypress include sharing the gospel and building on the church's foundation for the church worldwide. The church is connected and is to compel itself to grow through the universal connection. Richard Stearns writes, "The Lord's command to go out and make disciples is a direct invitation to join God in what He is doing—a call to take action."<sup>142</sup> The action here is for the members of Cypress to go to the nations.

In the last part of Matthew's Gospel, one of Jesus' disciples, Matthew, records some of Jesus' last words to his disciples. The commission in Matthew 28:19-20<sup>143</sup> to go to the nations from Jesus is a profound statement that applies to the Christian walk in many different variables. Matthew chapter ten, Jesus references the disciples to reach the Jewish nation by going to the lost sheep in Israel. Osborne writes, "The Risen Lord's universal authority makes possible the universal mission."<sup>144</sup> Williams Hendriksen writes, "It is very clear from the story of the non-Jewish wise men, who came to worship the newborn King, and that from the beginning the evangelization of the world was included in the purposes of God."<sup>145</sup> Osborne continues by writing, "Now he expands it and introduces a brand new element in salvation history, the universal mission."<sup>146</sup> The telling of the gospel is for all believers to share with those who do not

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<sup>141</sup>Lewis and Cordeiro, *Culture Shift*, 148.

<sup>142</sup>Stearns, *A Hole in the Gospel*, 68.

<sup>143</sup>Matt. 28:19-20, (NASB).

<sup>144</sup>Osborne, *Matthew*, 1156.

<sup>145</sup>William Hendriksen, *The New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids: MI, Baker Academic, 1973), 999.

<sup>146</sup>*Ibid.*, 1157.

know Jesus. Short-term missions help the believer as they go to the nations to begin seeing God's heart for the nations. Making disciples is the command in Matthew 28:19-20<sup>147</sup>. Hendriksen writes, "It must be appropriated by heart, mind, and will so that one remains or abides in the truth."<sup>148</sup> The theological foundation here is the truth, which stems from John 14:6, where Jesus says, "No one comes to the Father except through Jesus." The Christian should know that he or she possesses the truth, and since they have the truth, they need to go and tell others this life-changing truth. The truth is in knowing Jesus in a relationship and then sharing the story of salvation will help all who do not have that relationship by receiving Jesus.

Here, Jesus' words are specific and timely because He desperately wants the disciples to see the need for the gospel to go beyond themselves outside of their comfort zones. Jesus is saying the gospel is for both the Gentile and Jew. The disciples are to go and be change agents to the world. Osborne writes, "Jesus passes his authority on to the disciples, who through the Spirit will share his teaching power under God."<sup>149</sup> God now empowers the church with the Holy Spirit to go to the nations, share the truth, teach, and make disciples all for God's glory. The next section will reference the plan that Jesus is laying out for the church as it takes on "The Great Commission."

#### Acts 1:8

In Acts 1:8<sup>150</sup>, Jesus continues His teaching on the subject of the gospel and missions. Jesus is post-resurrection and is about to ascend to heaven. He has given the disciples the

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<sup>147</sup>Matt. 28:19-20 (NASB).

<sup>148</sup>Hendriksen, *The New Testament Commentary*, 1000.

<sup>149</sup>Osborne, *Matthew*, 1158.

<sup>150</sup>Acts 1:8 (NASB).

command to go, and now He is explaining the model—the how-to—of missions as far as going is concerned. This model in Acts 1:8 says the gospel begins at home, but the gospel is also to go to the nations. Henry Goudge writes, "They describe exactly the plan of Acts, which records the spread of the Gospel from Jerusalem to Rome, is described as 'the ends of the earth.'"<sup>151</sup> Jesus says He will not leave the disciples alone. Jesus says in Acts 1:8 that the disciples will be, "My [Jesus] witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and Samaria, and as far as the remotest part of the earth."<sup>152</sup> The model begins at home, Jerusalem, and goes from home to the other side of the world. The context here is that Jesus has risen from the grave and defeated sin for all humanity. He is about to ascend back to heaven to sit at the right hand of His Father. Jesus has disciplined, modeled, and prepared the disciples for what is next. He now gives some of His last words before His ascension into heaven. The emphasis from Acts and specifically verse 8 is that the disciples, and now all believers, are empowered by the Holy Spirit to carry out the mission. Craig Keener writes, "The witnesses specifically addressed in this verse are the Twelve, but their commission becomes paradigmatic for other, later witnesses."<sup>153</sup> The Book of Acts highlights many of those later witnesses, but ultimately it becomes the church's ministry to continue to go. Greear writes, "A culture that values sending will naturally give rise to structures necessary to facilitate that sending."<sup>154</sup> Keener goes on to write, "They, too, are empowered by the Spirit, a gift for all believers."<sup>155</sup> Simon Kistemaker writes, "In this text, Luke presents the theme for the

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<sup>151</sup>Henry Goudge, *A New Commentary on the Holy Scripture* (New York, NY: Macmillan Press, 1928), 202.

<sup>152</sup>Acts 1:8 (NASB).

<sup>153</sup>Craig S. Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary*. vol. 1. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing, 2012), 689.

<sup>154</sup>Greear, *The Explicit Gospel*, 58.

<sup>155</sup>*Ibid.*

entire book.”<sup>156</sup> Luke is even referencing what he wrote in Luke 10:49<sup>157</sup>. There is a parallel between Luke 10:49 and the Book of Acts: Jesus had the Holy Spirit descend on Him at His baptism and the beginning of His earthly ministry, the disciples are doing the same thing.

John 20:22<sup>158</sup> reference the disciples receiving the Holy Spirit and the command to go to the world. Kistemaker writes, "Before the apostles are able to assume the tremendous responsibility of building the church of Jesus Christ and to conquer the stronghold of Satan, they receive the power of the Holy Spirit."<sup>159</sup> The Holy Spirit abides in believers in Christ and guides them in their walk of faith.

In Acts 1:8, Jesus says, "but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and Samaria, and as far as the remotest part of the earth."<sup>160</sup> The word “witness” here has a two-fold meaning. “Witness” can refer to someone who tells of something they saw and heard—they were witness to it. Alternatively, as Kistemaker writes, "It refers to a person who presents a testimony by which he defends and promotes a cause."<sup>161</sup> Ultimately, Cypress's purpose is to go and make the name of Jesus famous to other nations through this ministry of short-term missions.

Jesus does not stop telling of the power indwelling the disciples or the challenge of being a witness. In the simplicity of Acts 1:8, Jesus lays out a plan. Jerusalem refers to sharing the

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<sup>156</sup>Simon J. Kistemaker, *The New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids: MI, Baker Academic, 1990), 53.

<sup>157</sup>Luke 10:49 (NASB).

<sup>158</sup>John 20:22 (NASB).

<sup>159</sup>*Ibid.*, 53.

<sup>160</sup>Acts 1:8 (NASB).

<sup>161</sup>*Ibid.*, 54



gospel at home. As said before, sharing Jesus for Cypress's Christians has become a spiritual discipline that many are practicing. The disciples then venture out and begin sharing in Samaria—the context of going beyond the local area as what Cypress is doing now by planting a church in Brooklyn, New York. Jesus is directly saying through Acts 1:8<sup>162</sup> to take the gospel to Rome. "From Rome the Good News reaches the entire world."<sup>163</sup> All roads leading into and out of Rome lead everywhere else when studying history. If they are to reach Rome, then they can reach the world at that time. Richard Longenecker writes it this way:

"The Christian church, according to Acts, is a missionary church that responds obediently to Jesus' commission, acts on Jesus' behalf in the extension of his ministry, focuses its proclamation of the Kingdom of God in its witness to Jesus, is guided and empowered by the self-same Spirit that directed and supported Jesus' ministry, and follows a program whose guidelines for outreach have been set by Jesus himself."<sup>164</sup>

#### Stephen's Testimony

God continues to use the church to share His love, and God is determined to do whatever it takes to get the gospel to the unreached people by using the church. Stephen is one of those chosen by the Apostles in Acts 6 to minister to the widows. God uses Stephen's testimony and death for the church to fulfill what Jesus is saying in Acts 1:8. Acts 6:3 says to choose men of "good reputation," and Acts 6:5 says he is a "man full of faith and the Holy Spirit."<sup>165</sup> As Acts 6 continues, Stephen continues performing miracles and preaching the gospel. Because Stephen is preaching the gospel, the Sanhedrin martyr him, and his martyrdom caused the church to go to the nations. Yon Gyong Kwon writes, "The fact that believers were scattered from Jerusalem

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<sup>162</sup>Acts 1:8 (NASB).

<sup>163</sup>Kistemaker, *The New Testament Commentary*, 54.

<sup>164</sup>Richard N. Longenecker, *The Expositor's Commentary*. vol. 9. ed. by Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Press, 1981), 256.

<sup>165</sup>Acts 6:3, 5 (NASB).

strikes a note of anticipation rather than despair (1:8)."<sup>166</sup> Acts chapter 7 tells a fitting story of what some would view as a tragedy, but God uses Stephen's story of martyrdom to move His people into action. Greear writes, "With the gospel comes responsibility."<sup>167</sup> As the story unfolds, Stephen is addressing the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem. The Sanhedrin was the "Supreme judicial council who investigates and persecutes the growing Christian church."<sup>168</sup> In Acts 7:51<sup>169</sup>, after Stephen shares the gospel story from Genesis to the resurrection of Jesus, he calls out the Sanhedrin's stubbornness. As Robert Jamieson, A.R. Fausset, and David Brown write, "We should view this as the summing up, the brief import of the whole Israelitish history—grossness of heart, spiritual deafness, continuous resistance of the Holy Ghost, down to the very council before whom Stephen was pleading."<sup>170</sup> When Stephen speaks to the Sanhedrin, he incites a riot. Stephen was quickly dragged out of the court and then stoned to death as he goes to heaven. Do note, one of the people there throwing the stones was Saul, soon to be Paul. The question raised of what does this story have to do with missions? Well, in chapter eight, the testimony of Stephen's life comes to fruition. Richard Longenecker says, "As a result of the persecution that began with the martyrdom of Stephen, the gospel was carried beyond the confines of Jerusalem, in initial fulfillment of Jesus's directive in 1:8."<sup>171</sup> The church's

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<sup>166</sup>Yon Gyong Kwon, *International Study Guide: A Commentary on Acts* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press Edition, 2015), 80.

<sup>167</sup>Greear, *Gaining by Losing*, 49.

<sup>168</sup>W. A. Elwell and B. J. Beitzel, *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 1902.

<sup>169</sup>Acts 7:51 (NASB).

<sup>170</sup>Robert Jamieson, A.R. Fausset, and David Brown, *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible* (Philadelphia, PA: Walter Rice, 1871), 331.

<sup>171</sup>Longenecker, *The Expositor's Commentary*, 383.

persecution began that day, but the church scattered throughout the regions. The gospel also spread, and the church began to grow. Verse four in chapter 8 references the scattering and telling and preaching. The scattering put believers in strategic places to share the gospel and begin planting churches. Kwon writes, "This explains the real significance of the scattering mentioned in v. 1. The verb 'to proclaim' means to 'preach the good news.'"<sup>172</sup>

### Beginning of the Church

In Acts 1:8<sup>173</sup>, Jesus talks about receiving power. The power referenced here is the Holy Spirit. As Acts chapter 2<sup>174</sup> begins, it is obvious the church is beginning, and the Holy Spirit is moving in the disciples to use the gifts given to them to proclaim the gospel. Missions in sharing the gospel as the Holy Spirit empowers the participants to continue building on the church's foundation, which began in Acts 2. Craig Keener writes, "Although Acts 1:8 explicitly associates the empowerment for proclaiming God's message only with the apostles, this passage demonstrates that the empowerment is provided for all Jesus's followers."<sup>175</sup> There are many nationalities represented in Acts 2 on this day, and God's Spirit will fall on everybody present to begin something special in their individual lives to take back to their respective countries. Acts 2 represents what the Christian church calls Pentecost. On this day in Acts 2, men came together from all over the world and understood each other in their tongue. As Peter preached, each person understood as if Peter was speaking in their language. I. Howard Marshal writes, "It must suffice to observe that the list is clearly meant to be an indication that people from all over the

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<sup>172</sup>Kwon, *International Study Guide*, 81.

<sup>173</sup>Acts 1:8 (NASB).

<sup>174</sup>Acts 2 (NASB).

<sup>175</sup>Craig S. Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary*, vo. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), 781.

known world were present, and perhaps that they would return to their own countries as witnesses to what was happening."<sup>176</sup> The apparent goal here is for the converts to go back to their respective countries to tell the story of Jesus and build the church. Marshal continues, "The result of the church's first evangelistic message was impressive."<sup>177</sup> The church began that day, and now the church is the agent to share the evangelistic message. Peter preached repentance and baptism, and in Acts 2:41<sup>178</sup>, 3000 people gave their lives to Christ. The gospel shared by Peter and the church already established gained new people to disciple. Kwon writes, "We think of Pentecost as the day when the Holy Spirit came. True, but the Holy Spirit did not remain idle."<sup>179</sup>

### Paul

Paul's life exemplifies missional living from the moment he began spreading the gospel by actually going on mission. Paul went on three missionary journeys in his lifetime, which are great examples for missions today. Paul's life does need discussion because of his life mission in planting churches to spread the gospel on his missionary journeys. First, there is the beginning of Saul's life, previous to Paul, and meeting Jesus. When Stephen is stoned, Paul is in hearty approval as he is present. As Stephen is dying, he asked for forgiveness for all of them. Marshal writes, "His last words were forgiveness for his executors, and close collocation of a reference to Saul suggests that we are meant to infer that the words had some effect on him."<sup>180</sup> Although, at present, Saul is already vigilant in persecuting all Christians and the Christian church. He was

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<sup>176</sup>I. Howard Marshal, *Acts: An Introduction and Commentary*. Tyndale New Testament Commentaries. vol. 5, ed. by Leon Morris (Downers Grove: IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 53.

<sup>177</sup>*Ibid.*, 66

<sup>178</sup>Acts. 2:41 (NASB).

<sup>179</sup>Kwon, *International Study Guide*, 30.

<sup>180</sup>Marshal, *Acts*, 118.

committed to the law that he believed every Christian should be thrown in jail or even killed. Saul was a disciple of Gamaliel who believed in Judaism and that the Christian church was not legitimate. Marshal writes, “Saul’s activity is confirmed in broad terms by his own unimpeachable testimony.”<sup>181</sup> In letters like 1 Corinthians and Galatians that Paul wrote, he admits being a church's persecutor. Just as Stephen’s death in Acts 7<sup>182</sup> caused the church to scatter, the persecution of the Christian church by Paul and others led to church growth. As the Christians were scattered, they were sharing the gospel and meeting as a church. Marshal writes, "The scattering of the Christians led to the most significant step forward in the mission of the church."<sup>183</sup> Paul’s persecution with others caused the church to live out Acts 1:8.

In Acts chapter 9<sup>184</sup>, Saul, soon to become Paul, had an encounter with Jesus. Saul goes from a church persecutor to a planter of churches across thousands of miles over three missionary journeys. As Acts 9 begins, Saul is on a mission to murder Christians that continue to live life as Jesus taught them to live. As it says in 9:2<sup>185</sup>, he was against those who were part of the "the way." Marshal writes, “God has appointed the way or manner of life which men should follow if they wish to be saved; the Christian claims that theirs was the way of God led to the absolute use of the term, is here.”<sup>186</sup> Jesus appears to him, but being that Saul does not identify with Jesus, he does not know who is appearing. Jesus's response in Acts 9:5 says, “I am Jesus

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<sup>181</sup>Marshal, *Acts*, 121.

<sup>182</sup>Acts 7 (NASB).

<sup>183</sup>Ibid.

<sup>184</sup>Acts 9 (NASB).

<sup>185</sup>Acts 9:2 (NASB).

<sup>186</sup>Ibid., 134.

whom you are persecuting.”<sup>187</sup> Marshal writes of His response, "The reply which he received showed that it was Jesus who was speaking, and whom he was persecuting."<sup>188</sup> Saul's life takes a complete radical turn from the Christian's persecution and the church to building the church for Jesus. Marshal continues, "Luke emphasizes how Paul was no sooner converted and called to be a witness to Jesus Christ than he began to fulfill his commission, associating himself with the existing Christians in Damascus and preaching to the unbelieving Jews."<sup>189</sup> Paul's conversion is radical because he immediately begins doing the exact opposite of his life before meeting Jesus. He became a witness for the gospel, and he begins planting churches that would, in turn, share the gospel to build the church.

Cypress' foundation of missions is to share the gospel and lay a foundation for the church, and Paul is a vital example of this in the Bible. Platt says, "First, according to Jesus, disciple-making involves going."<sup>190</sup> John Piper writes, "The reason we must send them in a manner worthy of God is that they go out for the sake of the name."<sup>191</sup>

Paul says in 2 Corinthians 2:4-5, "My message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God."<sup>192</sup> Paul wanted no man to trust him over Jesus or for Paul's name to be known, but Paul only wanted Christ to be known

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<sup>187</sup>Acts 9:5 (NASB).

<sup>188</sup>Marshal, *Acts*, 134.

<sup>189</sup>Ibid., 137.

<sup>190</sup>Platt, *Radical*, 93.

<sup>191</sup>John Piper, *Let the Nations Be Glad: The Supremacy of God in Missions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2010), 407.

<sup>192</sup>2 Cor. 2:4-5 (NASB).

everywhere. Paul's statement is the chief aim of short-term missions at Cypress to proclaim Jesus in places where He is not known.

Romans 15<sup>193</sup> tells a great deal of the life of Paul as he is ending his missionary journeys. Karl Barth writes, "In other words, even the best form of human obedience to the Gospel is simply measured, is again and again tested by whether or not it results in a real obedience to the Gospel?"<sup>194</sup> Paul had spent his life preaching the gospel to the nations. The church must operate in unity no matter where someone is in their walk of faith. Barth writes, "The man who walks in the way of faith must be regarded and treated as one whom God has received."<sup>195</sup> The receiving each other as believers allow the church to be healthy to share the gospel and grow more vital as a church to reach more with the gospel. In Romans 15:19-23<sup>196</sup>, Paul talks about the regions where he had planted churches and wanted to continue building the church in areas where there was no church. Greear writes, "God's expressed plan for history is to create a thriving church in every people group on the planet."<sup>197</sup> Paul's plan is to plant churches everywhere he goes. Paul is now planning to go to Spain. William Barclay writes, "It was in one sense the limit of the civilized world at that time, and that very fact would lure Paul on to preach there."<sup>198</sup> Barclay writes, "It may well be that Paul was saying to himself that, if only he could touch Spain for

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<sup>193</sup>Rom. 15 (NASB).

<sup>194</sup>Karl Barth, *A Shorter Commentary on Romans by Karl Barth: With an Introductory Essay by Maico Michielen*. ed. by Maico M. Michielen (Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto, 2007), 130.

<sup>195</sup>Ibid., 131.

<sup>196</sup>Rom. 15:19-23 (NASB).

<sup>197</sup>Greear, *Gaining by Losing*, 201.

<sup>198</sup>William Barclay, *The Letter to the Romans* (Louisville, KY: London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 241.

Christ, tremendous things might happen.”<sup>199</sup> Paul plans to plant churches and send out more people from these churches to continue spreading the gospel to the unreached people surrounding the areas. His mission to continue to Spain is a reflection of Romans 15:20. His goal is to tell others about Jesus, where He is not known. As Piper writes, "Missions exist because worship does not."<sup>200</sup> Piper's statement reflects the point that missions need to go where worship of God does not exist, reflecting the desire of Paul's life.

Romans 15:21<sup>201</sup> goes a little deeper in explaining the heart of Paul and the gospel. It is in this verse that Paul quotes Isaiah 52:15<sup>202</sup>. Both of these verses are representing the fact that the gospel brings life where there is no life. Karl Barth writes, "Paul remained faithful during all this time by refraining from linking up with any previous missionary work done by others, from 'building upon another man's foundation,' and to limit himself to those places and region where Christ was not yet known, thus learning the literal truth of Isa. 52:15."<sup>203</sup> Barth writes, "It may after all be possible that if we shun Paul's boldness we are finally and decisively shunning the Gospel itself."<sup>204</sup> As Piper writes, "God's will for missions is that every people group be reached with the testimony of Christ and that a people be called out for his name from all the nations."<sup>205</sup> Paul's vision of planting churches and then those churches sending out missionaries was an

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<sup>199</sup>Barclay, *Romans*, 241.

<sup>200</sup>Piper, *Nations*, 353.

<sup>201</sup>Rom. 15:21 (NASB).

<sup>202</sup>Is. 52:15

<sup>203</sup>Barth, *Romans*, 139.

<sup>204</sup>Ibid., 139.

<sup>205</sup>Ibid., 277.



expansion of himself to grow the ministry. Piper writes, "Our responsibility is to define missions His way and then obey."<sup>206</sup> Barclay writes, "It was Paul's one ambition to carry the good news of God to men and women who had never heard it."<sup>207</sup> Many of Paul's established churches worked to reach those who had not heard by sending out from those established churches. Theodore S. de Bruyn says, "He promised that he would come while he was on his way to Spain—for Christ had not been proclaimed there to engage their minds."<sup>208</sup>

Paul's letters to the churches reveal his heart for the gospel. His passion is what he wants to imprint on all the churches he plants. In 2 Corinthians, towards the end of chapter five, Paul writes a poignant view that he is passionate about the believer embracing the truth in his or her own heart. Paul uses words and phrases like "new creature," "reconciled," "ministry of reconciliation," "ambassador for Christ," and "reconciled to God."<sup>209</sup> Although pointed at the church, reconciliation here is about an individual reconciled to God through salvation to serve Him in obedience. Guthrie writes, "One must be reconciled to God before one can participate in the ministry of reconciliation."<sup>210</sup> When one becomes a new creature and reconciles to God through Jesus, it is not a universal decision. Reconciliation is an individual decision. Matt Chandler writes, "In this one passage, we see that we are reconciled as individuals, but this is not the end of the gospel story or its implications."<sup>211</sup> The challenge from Paul is to understand that

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<sup>206</sup>Piper, *Nations*, 277.

<sup>207</sup>*Ibid.*, 239-240.

<sup>208</sup>Theodore S. de Bruyn, *Ambrosiaster's Commentary on the Pauline Epistles: Romans*, ed. by John T. Fitzgerald, (Atlanta, GA: SBS Pres, 2017), 261.

<sup>209</sup>2 Cor. 5 (NASB).

<sup>210</sup>George H. Guthrie, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: 2 Corinthians*, ed. by Robert W. Yarbrough and Robert H. Stein (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2015), 309.

<sup>211</sup>Chandler, *The Explicit Gospel*, 145.

salvation does not stop with the person. Chandler writes, "We are given a gift of trusting Christ, then entrusted with repeating the message of this gift."<sup>212</sup> J.K. Mozley, C. Gore, H.L. Goudge, and A. Guillaume write, "And so, says St. Paul, I am an ambassador in the affairs of Christ; it is as though in my voice you listened to the appeal of God; as an ambassador for Christ my message is be reconciled to God."<sup>213</sup> 2 Corinthians 5 summarizes Paul's mission that the believer now represents Christ in all things. The heartbeat of short-term missions at Cypress is to represent Christ.

### Antioch

As seen through this discussion in the book of Acts, God uses His people to share His truth. The Old Testament does not bring the church age, but when Jesus ascended into heaven, the church age began, and missions began with the church. Without the church, there is no sending unit, and there is no accountability for the missionary as he or she goes to the nations. Alfred McBride writes that Antioch was "the provincial capital of Syria and the third-largest city in the Roman Empire."<sup>214</sup> Antioch was one of those places the church scattered to in the stoning of Stephen. Antioch became a church that was seeking the Lord and seeing many come to know Jesus personally. In Acts 11<sup>215</sup>, it references Antioch where Barnabas comes from Jerusalem to visit as well, as once he is there, he sends for Paul to come with him. Barnabas was part of the early church in Jerusalem. In Acts 4, he is called "the son of encouragement"<sup>216</sup> because of his

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<sup>212</sup>Chandler, *The Explicit Gospel*, 145.

<sup>213</sup>J.K. Mozley, C. Gore, H.L. Goudge, and A Guillaume, *II Corinthians. A New Commentary on Holy Scripture: Including the Apocrypha*. (New York, NY: The Macmillan Company, 1942), 523.

<sup>214</sup>Alfred McBride, *The Gospel of the Holy Spirit: Meditation and Commentary on the Acts of Apostles* (Charlotte, NC: Saint Benedict Press, 1992), 67.

<sup>215</sup>Acts 11 (NASB).

<sup>216</sup>Acts 4 (NASB).

generosity to help anyone in need. The church was still only sharing the gospel with Jews, but the need for others to hear was still there. McBride writes, "The awakening consciousness of the need to bring the Gospel to the gentiles is a need for establishing a mission to the Greek population in Antioch."<sup>217</sup> As more and more people of God come to Antioch to encourage each other and study together, the gospel for others outside of Antioch becomes apparent to the church. In Acts 11:28<sup>218</sup>, Agabus, a prophet sent from Jerusalem, prophesies that there will be a famine. Showing Antioch's heart, "The prospect of famine quickens their generosity even more, and Saul and Barnabas are dispatched with a sizable relief fund for the beleaguered community."<sup>219</sup> Antioch now has become a sending church.

Acts 11:25<sup>220</sup> ends with Barnabas and Paul is finishing their missionary journey while returning to Antioch, and they, in turn, bring John Mark into the picture. Colossian 4:10 says that John Mark is the cousin of Barnabas. As Acts 13<sup>221</sup> begins, the Holy Spirit speaks to the church to set apart Barnabas and Saul. Barnabas and Saul were set apart for the call that God had laid upon them. One of the roles of the church, Antioch included, is to see the gifts within the members of the church and help equip the members of the church to fulfill its calling by using their gifts. Bob Utley writes, "These men were already called, gifted, functioning leaders. It is not a new ministry they are called to, but an expansion of what they were already doing."<sup>222</sup>

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<sup>217</sup>McBride, *The Gospel of the Holy Spirit*, 67.

<sup>218</sup>Acts 11:28 (NASB).

<sup>219</sup>Ibid., 68.

<sup>220</sup>Acts 11: 25 (NASB).

<sup>221</sup>Acts 13 (NASB).

<sup>222</sup>Bob Utley, *The Gospel According to Paul: Romans*. 5 vol. Study Guide Commentary Series (Marshall, TX: Bible Lessons International, 2004), 161.

Ultimately the Holy Spirit is the authority in the church, and Barnabas and Paul were already sharing the gospel and building on the church through the power of the Holy Spirit. The church is now affirming the gifts within them from the Holy Spirit to continue the journey in doing the ministry God called them to do. As Bob Utley writes, "He calls, gifts, directs, convicts, and empowers. No permanent or effective ministry can occur without His presence and blessing."<sup>223</sup> As M. David Sills writes, "With such a clear calling and the affirmation from your church, the calling would not just influence but determine the course of your life."<sup>224</sup> The calling itself did not come from the church because it was already evident in these two men through the Holy Spirit's work. Sills writes, "Paul and Barnabas were already faithful teachers in the church at Syrian Antioch when the Holy Spirit told the church to set them apart for the missionary work to which He had called them."<sup>225</sup> When studying the book of Acts, Antioch becomes a central figure as a church that prepares and sends out those prepared to share the gospel and establish the church where there was no church. Antioch becomes an example of the church becoming a training ground for sending out missionaries. Cypress is striving to practice the same thing the church at Antioch practiced. When a short-term mission team is going to the nations, the church lays hands on them, setting them apart for the specific purpose of going. Antioch illustrates Biblically this call for churches to send out their members to the nations from the book of Acts.

### The Nations

The Bible is full of references referring to the nations. The authors of the Bible write about the worship of God by the nations. The worship of God by the nations illustrates itself in

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<sup>223</sup>Utley, *Romans*, 161.

<sup>224</sup> Sills, *The Missionary Call*, 103.

<sup>225</sup>Ibid., 54

the book of Psalms. Psalm 67<sup>226</sup> is a song referencing praise to God as the nations sing out to God. Psalm 67 is rooted in the salvation of individuals through Jesus as they respond to Him. John Piper writes, "It [salvation] is rooted in God's covenant with Abraham."<sup>227</sup> The whole point of the nations worshipping God directs itself from Genesis 12<sup>228</sup>, where He says He will bless Abraham and make him a great nation. As the believer declares God's goodness to the nations, God receives the glory. God does many works among and through His people. As Piper writes, "The prayer is really meant to be read as a realization of the covenant with Abraham and as an expression of how that covenant would be fulfilled in us today through Jesus Christ."<sup>229</sup> Sharing the gospel is the beauty of making disciples in all of the nations.

### Conclusion

This project's theological foundation has shown through scripture a basis for short-term missions and why the many who are not going need to seek the Holy Spirit's guidance and commit to at least one short-term mission trip that Cypress offers. Through Abraham's life to Paul and many more, there is a theoretical foundation for short-term missions through the sending church. Piper writes, "The aim of missions is to 'bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations. (Rom. 1:5).'"<sup>230</sup> It culminates in the nations glorifying God because the truth has set them free.

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<sup>226</sup>Psalm 67 (NASB).

<sup>227</sup>John Piper and David Mathis, *Finish the Mission: Bringing the Gospel to the Unreached and Unengaged* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 136.

<sup>228</sup>Gen. 12 (NASB).

<sup>229</sup>Ibid., 137.

<sup>230</sup>Ibid., 198.

## Theoretical Foundations

The theoretical foundation is going to analyze the results from other studies as it compares to this study on those choosing to go or not to go on a short-term mission trip. The theoretical foundation will discuss the areas where the project manager sees the value for short-term missions and why the members can be part of something grand. Cypress has a vision for short-term missions, and in fulfilling that vision, the members of Cypress have an opportunity to go on short-term mission trips and help change lives. Priest writes, "We understand that the Church is ultimately the only sending entity as it is Christ's representative in this world to pursue the *mission Dei*."<sup>231</sup>

## Partnerships

Short-term mission trips help fulfill the Great Commission, as stated in Matthew 28.<sup>232</sup> As long as Cypress teams are sharing the gospel to build the church, it is living out scripture through the ministry of short-term missions. A partnership with another ministry and the host country is one of the better ways to make short-term mission trips happen. The church is worldwide, and all churches' goals should be to build each other up in partnership for a stronger foundation to further the gospel. There is a fear among many and a partnership can help alleviate the fears if people can understand what the partnership does for them on both sides of the globe. The partnership needs to have a global mindset, but for Cypress to partner with a global ministry, the partner's vision must align with Cypress's vision. Robert Priest writes, "The fact that a larger percentage of all short-term workers went with agencies whose primary activities were related to

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<sup>231</sup>Priest, *Effective Engagement in Short-term Missions*, 66.

<sup>232</sup>Matt. 28 (NASB).

relief/development and evangelism/discipleship.”<sup>233</sup> Priest study shows an increase in going and what choices participants are using as they go.

Short-term mission is a big part of global missions, and there are several ways it is happening. Priest study here is on short-term mission trips and their effect on those that go. He even studies how participants can and does positively impact those who commit their lives to short-term missions. Priest writes, "Positively, the total number of people deployed in missionary service has increased for more than a decade, as has the inflation-adjusted income for overseas ministries."<sup>234</sup> Priest's study shows through para-church partnerships, and there is an increasing number of people working for and going to the nations on short-term mission trips. Parachurch is a term used for ministries outside of the church that the church can partner with to help come alongside to do short-term mission trips internationally. So, if the number of participants on short-term mission trips increases nationally, as Cypress grows, the number of those on their short-term mission trips should also increase. In answering the question of "why" many are not going, and the "how" short-term missions at Cypress can be better will hopefully get great results. A positive outcome in this project answers the question "why" and then will see an increase in Cypress members going on short-term missions. The relationships with the partners can help alleviate fear before one even goes on their first short-term mission trip. Priest writes, "We believe it is possible for short-term missions to benefit long-term mission and that the two models can exist in harmony rather than tension."<sup>235</sup> Priest shows that partnerships are of value to the church as it sees participants in short-term missions.

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<sup>233</sup>Priest, *Effective Engagement in Short-term Missions*, 33.

<sup>234</sup>Ibid., 18.

<sup>235</sup>Ibid., 65.

The danger here in short-term mission trips is not understanding their purpose around the globe. Priest studies show that without a proper perspective, the church can do more harm than good globally. Priest is pointing out the weakness in these trips that teams must take into account. Priest writes, "By definition, short-term missions is the mobilization of the church in the power of the Holy Spirit to join God's action in the world."<sup>236</sup> As Priest points out, the relationship within the partnership—for Cypress, it is 410Bridge and Servantlife—is a strength that adds positive attributes to the ministry of short-term missions. Robert Priest makes an excellent point on the weaknesses in the following statement.

“In an attempt to define short-term missions, we must be conscious of the ambiguities surrounding the task. One is the danger of exclusively defining short-term missions as cross-cultural experiences that happen only outside of the United States. Another danger is that definitions tend to give too much emphasis to the missional practices of the North American Church and thereby place God, the protagonist of mission, in a secondary role. Short-term mission has a greater potential of being a significant instrument of God's mission, if we can place it into the larger agenda of the *glocal* church.”<sup>237</sup>

### The Church

The second part of Cypress's vision is to go to the nations and build on the foundation of the church already present in the host countries. David Livermore writes, "By 2000, more than two-thirds of the Christian church lived outside North America and Western Europe."<sup>238</sup> As Cypress' vision states, Cypress desires to go to the nation and share the gospel, but Cypress needs a better understanding that the church is outside of North America and all over the world. Livermore writes, "The largest Christian communities today are not in the in the U.S. Bible Belt

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<sup>236</sup>Priest, *Effective Engagement in Short-term Missions*, 278.

<sup>237</sup>Ibid., 278.

<sup>238</sup>Livermore, *What Can I Do?*, 23.



but in Africa and Latin America."<sup>239</sup> The theoretical standpoint is that the church needs to unite with the church abroad to share God's love in many facets. In comparison to this project, Livermore is laying a strong foundation that undergirds the vision of short-term missions at Cypress. A possible reason many choose not to go is they do not see a connection of the church globally. The harm here points back to the North American Church's previous point, believing the North American church is superior to the church worldwide.

Kurt Alan Ver Beek studied short-term missions specifically in Honduras and their effects on those that go. He asked 122 different people who went on a short-term mission trip if they would recommend going on a short-term mission trip. "All 122 of those who responded to a question asking if they would recommend a similar experience to others stated they would 'recommend' or 'highly recommend' it."<sup>240</sup> Cypress desires to see more members experiencing life change through this study because of the trip's experience. Ver Beek continues on the subject of should someone go on a short-term mission trip with his survey of the 122 participants. Ver Beek shows an increase in "prayer life, time-serving, giving money, church involvement, caring for the poor, and interest in long-term and short-term missions."<sup>241</sup> The difference between this finding and this project is that this project does not have the time to see the choices participants make over years after returning from short-term mission trips and if the trips brought about new life choices. Ver Beek's study brings to light that there can be additional training with the teams in the area of life choices such as serving in the church, prayer life, and the giving of time and money. Ver Beek writes about how the church can build lasting relationships with the indigenous

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<sup>239</sup>Livermore, *What Can I Do?*, 24.

<sup>240</sup>Ver Beek, "The Impact of Short-term Missions," 485.

<sup>241</sup>Ibid., 486.

people. The weakness he brings out in the relationships between both countries does not get rooted in people's lives. Ver Beek writes, "Several community members and development organization representatives believed the STM [short-term missions] groups might have had a more positive, lasting impact if they had been more involved in the Honduran communities."<sup>242</sup> The more a disconnect of the people visited and served, the less connection to the communities. Ver Beek continues by writing, "By attending church services, eating meals together, etc., they would have built stronger relationships and demonstrated that they wanted not only to give to but also learn from Hondurans."<sup>243</sup>

In joining God at home or abroad, the church is to send missionaries. The church is mandated to disciple its believers. The short-term mission's ministry of Cypress is not just about sending a team on a week-long trip but about discipling believers. LiErin Probasco writes in her study, "In religious communities, the conviction that brief, intense experiences can influence attitudes and behaviors can be seen in the increasing presence of short-term mission trips in the programs offered by congregations."<sup>244</sup> She continues by writing, "Existing research provides clear evidence that short-term mission travel influences the belief and practices of adolescents and emerging adults."<sup>245</sup> As this project continues to study the "why" many choose not to go from Cypress, the purpose is to diminish the fear many have. There are many excuses people will use, but the theory is the excuses all stem from fear. Chapter four is going to show from Cypress the reasons used for not going. Many churches are practicing short-term mission trips, but the

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<sup>242</sup>Ver Beek, *The Impact of Short-term Missions*, 489.

<sup>243</sup>Ibid.

<sup>244</sup>Probasco, "Giving Time, Not Money," 203.

<sup>245</sup>Ibid., 206.

question remains whether it is just a trip or a life-changing experience. Probasco quotes Ver Beek by writing, "Ver Beek (2008) suggests mission trip participants are like saplings: the experience of travel may bend them in a particular direction, but without additional reinforcement, they will return to their pre-travel shape and directory."<sup>246</sup> Cypress's goal is not only to go on trips but also to disciple believers in missional living before the trip and follow-up once the trip is over. Hopefully, the wisdom gained from this project will allow more members to decide to go for their personal spiritual growth. Short-term missions are not new, but the ministry itself can offer changes for participants that last a lifetime. Probasco points specifically to this, writing that trips do not need to focus on the task of the trip only. Only focusing on the task is a significant weakness in short-term mission trips. Probasco says, "To better understand the role and salience of non-routine religious experiences like mission trips over the course of a lifetime, researchers need to better specify the relationship between mechanisms of change and the passage of time."<sup>247</sup>

Emily Katherine McDonald, in her study, interviewed several different people on why they chose to go. She wrote the underlining reason for all of them. "These contrasting reasons for getting involved all center on the church presenting the opportunity,"<sup>248</sup> she writes. The analysis for this project with the study shows some important information for the local church. McDonald's points to the church presenting the opportunities. Cypress members want the staff to lead them before God. Some of the reasons why some choose not to go might be in the presentation of the trips. How are they being offered? Emily Katherine McDonald's study shows

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<sup>246</sup>Probasco, "Giving Time, Not Money," 206.

<sup>247</sup>Ibid., 221.

<sup>248</sup>McDonald, "Perceptions of the 'Less Fortunate,'" 75.

that the short-term mission trip is not about the destination. It is about serving alongside the participant's church in ministry on a short-term mission trip. McDonald writes, "Their traveling and spreading their religious ideology and performing acts deemed as service by the individual church or larger organizational structure described previously is the emphasis."<sup>249</sup> As Probasco has studied, the history of past trips shows its relevance and how short-term mission trips can be a more vital ministry within any local body when done correctly.

### Relationship

Studying the aspect of relationships with short-term mission trips at Cypress is comparable to other studies on the same subject. Is there not as deep of a commitment to Jesus if someone chooses not to go on a short-term mission trip with Cypress? Eric Carpenter's study writes, "The goal is to demonstrate a link between the concepts of the deeper life and the heart for mission."<sup>250</sup> Carpenter's study looks at participation in missions and a deeper connection to a person's walk with Christ because of relationships. Carpenter writes, "The filling of God's Spirit leads us to a deeper relationship with Christ and directs people to the heart of God's mission."<sup>251</sup> Carpenter continues by writing, "Real missional engagement entails the building of authentic, organic, and consistent relationships that lead to intentional discipleship."<sup>252</sup> In context here, Carpenter's study involves only those who have been on short-term mission trips, which is a weakness here because the study did not look at those who do not participate in short-term mission trips. Hopefully, Cypress can grow the ministry of short-term missions through

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<sup>249</sup>McDonald, "Perceptions of the 'Less Fortunate,'" 35.

<sup>250</sup>Carpenter, "The Effect Participation on a Short-term Mission," 23.

<sup>251</sup>Ibid., 24.

<sup>252</sup>Ibid.

discipleship on missions of its members. Carpenter's results write, "STM trips has increase in intrinsic motivation toward Missional engagement."<sup>253</sup> The goal is to see more missional engagement in Cypress members.

### Motivation

Understanding why some go and why many do not go means there needs to be knowledge about what drives people. Yoon Jung Lee writes, "Like volunteers, STM travelers are sometimes motivated by helping other people."<sup>254</sup> As said before, Cypress members are giving, serving people, but many of these serving people do not see a need to go to the nations. Carpenter quotes Priest by writing, "Priest mentioned that STM traveler's motivations are complex and diverse."<sup>255</sup> Priest refers to motivation here based on the sending church and how its particular vision aligns with missions and going to the nations.

In studying why many choose not to go on a short-term mission trip, there needs to be an understanding of the motivation of those who choose to go. Lee writes, "STM participants expressed a significant change, called a life-changing experience, through a trip."<sup>256</sup> Lee's study tracts participants' behavior before and after trips, motivation, and life change. These factors can help this particular project for communication to Cypress members to help motivate more to go. Lee writes, "The study found that STM's positively influenced the spiritual well-being and self-esteem of their participants."<sup>257</sup> Lee went even further in his study. He studied pre-trip, post-trip,

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<sup>253</sup>Carpenter, "The Effect Participation on a Short-term Mission Trip," 94.

<sup>254</sup>Lee, "Mission Travelers," 36.

<sup>255</sup>Ibid., 24

<sup>256</sup>Ibid., 18.

<sup>257</sup>Ibid., 19.

and six months after the trip. Lee writes, "STM experiences positively affected the spiritual well-being of his participants, but it did not last up to six months after the trip."<sup>258</sup> This a weakness in short-term mission trips, and it points to the sending church for not enough follow-up and discipleship before and after trips. Lee went a little deeper in his study, where he studied several post-trip participants a year out after the return from a short-term mission trip. In these findings, he found some interesting data that went in a more positive direction. Lee writes, "Extensive pre-trip training had a positive impact on the cross-cultural sensitivity of STM travelers."<sup>259</sup> The hope in comparison to this project with Cypress's people is that with more training and discipleship in missions and short-term missions specifically, more members will commit to going on a short-term mission trip.

### Conclusion

The Theoretical Foundations for short-term mission trips establishes a basis for short-term missions. However, there is much history for short-term missions in North America. It has also increased in the number of trips over the years. There are numerous reasons why Cypress members are not choosing to go on short-term mission trips through Cypress, and the goal is to know why they are making this choice. If the project manager can understand the "why" many are choosing not to go, he can hopefully see "how" to recruit more to participate in short-term missions at Cypress. Through partnerships, relationships, motivations, and the church, one can learn how to know the "why" many are choosing not to go. Knowing the strengths and weaknesses of other studies will influence this project as it continues growing short-term missions as Cypress. McGuinness writes, "The fact of the matter is that we need to engage in

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<sup>258</sup>Lee, "Mission Travelers," 19.

<sup>259</sup>Ibid., 20.

wise action."<sup>260</sup> These previous studies will influence the present and future of this project to make short-term missions a more active ministry at Cypress.

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<sup>260</sup>McGuinness, *Walk this Way*, 73.

## Chapter 3

### Methodology

Cypress Baptist Church has many people who love God and are passionate about doing His will. These same people look to the ministerial staff to lead Cypress in their walk of faith in making decisions for their daily lives. M. David Sills writes, “One is the source of the desires in the heart of a person who is delighting in the Lord is God himself.”<sup>261</sup> Scripture has established God's desire for all to share the gospel and to go to the nations. Believers are all gifted differently as the Bible leads them to serve God with their gifts, but all Christians are to walk in obedience. Walter Richard Sego III writes, "Short-term mission teams prove critical to the church in terms of carrying out the Great Commission."<sup>262</sup> This chapter will lay a plan to help study why people choose not to go on a short-term mission trip to help Cypress decide to go. The project will study methods that can be used for Cypress's future to help with the ministry of short-term missions. The intervention and implementation design discussed in this chapter will answer why many choose not to go but will hopefully answer how more people can participate in this ministry. Understanding Cypress members' choices will help in recruiting to see more be a part of this ministry.

### Purpose

In understanding why some go, there needs to be a realization of the purposes of short-term mission trips. Sego writes, "Such teams need more than an airline ticket, duffel bag full of

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<sup>261</sup>Sills, *The Missionary Call*, 28.

<sup>262</sup>Walter Richard Sego III, “Develop a Small Group Teaching Module to Prepare Volunteer Teams at Trinity Baptist Church for Short-Term Mission Trips” (ProQuest Dissertation, Southeastern Louisiana University, 2018), 39.



supplies, and a passport."<sup>263</sup> A short-term mission trip is just a small part of these three things. A short-term mission trip needs training in culture, travel, discipleship, culture shock, gospel presentation, testimony preparation, and many other things. Without this preparation, the airline ticket, duffel bag, and passport only get a person to a destination, but with no preparation on the actual task of the short-term mission trip. Sego writes, "Though such things are necessary, a teams' training must involve a level of preparation modeled by a disciple-making pastor."<sup>264</sup> Ultimately there are people involved that will come together from different cultures. Matthew Alan Trill writes, "It is crucial that every individual involved in STM remembers that ministry is relational."<sup>265</sup> When a team member realizes that a short-term mission trip is about relationships—with God, other Cypress members, and the host country—the whole perspective changes. Often participants sign-up for a short-term mission trip to see another culture without understanding the particular trip's task or objective. The relationships with others from another culture allow an individual to gain a world view. However, even more prominent, it opens a believer's heart to see God's heart for the nations as established in chapter 2. Paul McGuinness writes, "We truly believed that any results we achieved would be the fruit of these relationships."<sup>266</sup> The trip itself becomes more significant than just completing a project or going on a trip. Trill writes, "It helps to develop group motives and goals centered on the team's stated purpose."<sup>267</sup> The understanding is that some are not going because they do not understand the

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<sup>263</sup>Sego, *Developing a Small Teaching Model*, 38.

<sup>264</sup>*Ibid.*, 38.

<sup>265</sup>Matthew Alan Trill, "Short-Term Missions: Developing an Effective and Sustainable Program in the Local Church" (Doctoral Thesis, Liberty University, 2019), 60.

<sup>266</sup>McGuinness, *Walk this Way*, 54.

<sup>267</sup>*Ibid.*, 60.

purpose, and even if they do, that purpose is not enough to change their minds to go on a short-term mission trip from Cypress. Trill continues by writing, "Partnership also offers a sense of ownership among participants. They may more easily see the big picture of their efforts and their responsibility for the Great Commission around the world."<sup>268</sup>

### Ministry Involvement

Within this project's methods of seeking an understanding of why some choose not to go on short-term mission trips, Cypress members need to know that all have a ministry in Christ. This statement is not saying that all should go into full-time ministry. Choosing to go on a short-term mission trip is engaging in ministry, and through a 7 to 11-day trip, a believer can come into an even more in-depth understanding of their ministry purpose. Twibell writes, "A healthy partnership that embraces mutuality as a sign of cooperation and shows interest in the overarching mission of the church will likely result in the enhancement of its ministry opportunities."<sup>269</sup> In other words, a ten-day trip to another country that a person has never been to changes one's life to where they come back ready to serve in places they never served before within their local church and community. They may come back ready to teach Sunday School for the first time, and on day one of the trip, it was not even a thought in their mind. Trill writes, "It can stretch certain participants during training and provide opportunities for personal spiritual growth. This can also equip underutilized church members for greater future service and ministry."<sup>270</sup> As stated in the purpose and thesis statement, the project is seeking answers on why

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<sup>268</sup>Trill, "Short-term Missions," 61.

<sup>269</sup>Twibell, "Integrated Partnerships," 64.

<sup>270</sup>Ibid., 62.

many Cypress members do not choose to go, and with these answers, the future of Cypress's involvement in short-term missions will grow.

### Communication of Short-term Missions

The church's overall vision should lead to Cypress's people walking with Jesus in a relationship to fulfill the vision of the church they attend. Sego writes, "The church should recognize discipleship as foundational in order for the church to have sustained effectiveness at carrying out the mission that Jesus entrusted with His people."<sup>271</sup> Cypress members may not understand the purpose of a particular trip or even the real purpose of short-term missions, as defined by Cypress. The question for some might even do they even qualify for a trip. Trill writes, "Moving from the prospect of a team to viable candidates to equipped and funded participants is a crucial process which will determine the level of success for a project."<sup>272</sup> In seeking answers, communication is crucial to understand who can go on a short-term mission trip. At Cypress, no matter where a person is in their walk of faith, they can sign-up and go on a short-term mission trip. Trill writes, "However, leaders must be open to accepting those who are genuinely interested and will follow the prescribed procedure to be included."<sup>273</sup> All believers have a call of ministry in their life. Ephesians 4:12 Paul writes, "for the equipping of the saints for the work of service."<sup>274</sup> The Missions Pastor's responsibility is to equip the Cypress members to see their gifts and use them on a short-term mission trip. Stearns writes, "We are told that God

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<sup>271</sup>Sego, "Developing a Small Group Teaching Module," 38.

<sup>272</sup>Trill, "Short-term Missions," 62.

<sup>273</sup>Ibid.

<sup>274</sup>Eph. 4:12 (NASB).

has distributed the gifts throughout the Church to equip His people to do kingdom work."<sup>275</sup>

Moreover, it also solidifies that if God includes all, all have the opportunity to learn more about ministry opportunities. Trill writes, "This can accomplish the objective of the oft-used concept of leading people 'out of their comfort zone.'"<sup>276</sup>

### Mission Education

Ultimately, this process laid out later in this chapter will help see Cypress members engaging in short-term missions, which will ultimately lead all of these participants into more ministry as Cypress grows. John Curtis Foster writes, "The local church remains in the position of making sure it fulfills the mandate to participate in the Mission of God."<sup>277</sup> Hopefully, some knowledge will be gained through the intervention and implementation process to do short-term missions better with more involvement. The church does have to be led in the right direction by its leaders. Foster writes, "If church leaders do not make it a priority to include mission education in the ministry of the church and do not participate by living a life on mission, our churches will not make missions a priority."<sup>278</sup> The project needs to understand how to educate, train, recruit and make the trips even better. As Foster writes, "If a church believes missions is important, it should be included in the overall ministry structure of the church. It will then be a

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<sup>275</sup>Stearns, *A Hole in Our Gospel*, 264.

<sup>276</sup>Trill, 63.

<sup>277</sup>John Curtis Foster, "An Assessment of Mission Education Participation Among Southern Baptist Churches in West Virginia" (Doctoral Thesis, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2015), 84.

<sup>278</sup>*Ibid.*, 85.

mission-minded church."<sup>279</sup> The end goal is to see missions interwoven in every area of the church. Foster writes, "It must be the foundation of every ministry in the church."<sup>280</sup>

Short-term missions are a big part of Cypress's vision to go to the nations. George W. Peters writes, "Not the welfare and glory of man, not the growth and expansion of the church, but the glory of God forms the highest goal of missions because the being and character of God are the deepest ground of missions."<sup>281</sup> Cypress's vision is always to continue building on the church's foundation universally, not just Cypress, and to share the gospel. Peters writes, "As salvation originated in the eternal counsel of God, as salvation was procured historically in the person and work of Christ, the eternal Son of God, so the administration and actualizations of salvation have been committed unto the Holy Spirit."<sup>282</sup> The Holy Spirit empowers the participant in a short-term mission trip to carry out the calling for all trips. Peters writes, "Missions is not an imposition upon the church for it belongs to her nature and should be as natural as grapes are natural branches that abide in the vine."<sup>283</sup> Peters continues by writing, "Missions flows from inner constitution, character, calling and design of the church."<sup>284</sup> As Cypress, the desire is to see missions permeate every aspect of the church.

### **Intervention Design**

In a project like this one, the goal is to see more people engaged in missional activity as part of Cypress Baptist Church's vision. As this project continues, there will be a plan put into

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<sup>279</sup>Foster, "An Assessment of Mission Education," 87

<sup>280</sup>*Ibid.*, 87.

<sup>281</sup>George W. Peters, *A Biblical Theology of Missions* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1972), 40.

<sup>282</sup>*Ibid.*, 111.

<sup>283</sup>*Ibid.*, 141.

<sup>284</sup>*Ibid.*, 141.

place to study the question of why many choose not to go. Why do some choose to go to the nations to share the gospel to build on the church? Why do many choose not to do this outside of their community or even in their community? Ernest T. Stringer writes, "Action research is a systematic approach to investigation that enables people to find effective solutions to problems they confront in their everyday lives."<sup>285</sup> The purpose of this project is to find out what reasons the members of Cypress are using to not go to the nations, and with this knowledge, the project manager hopes to begin the process to help alleviate these reasons. The best way to find the answers is to ask the people of Cypress why they choose to go or not to go. Tim Sensing writes, "The worker does not focus only on solutions to problems but on human development. The responsibility for a project's success lies with the people."<sup>286</sup> The "human development" aspect of this is first seeking answers from Cypress members and then developing a process that will allow them to step out in faith in the ministry of short-term missions. The participants need to be teenagers through senior adults, and from both groups of those that go and do not go. There are questions for those that go and those that do not go. Many Cypress members desire to go and love in the name of Jesus on those from other cultures. This group of people within Cypress will be a great wealth of information for this project. The active participants' input makes recruiting for short-term mission trips a team effort. Non-participants who answer the questions will bring outstanding results for this project. The non-participants bring the best insight as to why many are choosing not to go. Sensing writes, "The people who are expected to benefit from the knowledge should be the ones who are asked to participate."<sup>287</sup>

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<sup>285</sup>Ernest T. Stringer, *Action Research* (Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications, 2014), 1.

<sup>286</sup>Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research: A multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses* (Eugene, OR: WIPF and Stock, 2011), 42.

<sup>287</sup>*Ibid.*, 33.

Every believer has a gift from God to serve Him, but the gift is not necessarily a gift to go and live in another culture for the rest of one's life. Sills writes, "Every believer is to pray for the nations and support the cause of missions but not every believer is called to leave his homeland and go overseas."<sup>288</sup> The missionary call is about fulfilling the call to share the gospel and build on the church. Sills continues by writing, "Some will help send and support, and others will go and tell."<sup>289</sup> There is something for everyone to do at Cypress in missions. Peters writes, "God has chosen human instruments to accomplish His task in human hearts within a human society surrounded by human environment."<sup>290</sup>

### Tasks

First, to seek answers to why many are not choosing to go on short-term mission trips with Cypress, Cypress's people have to see the right questions. The project manager keeps a list of all past participants in a file on the project manager's computer. The project manager will contact the people from this list to ask their permission to participate in the project. The project manager will send the questionnaire to the agreeable participants. Before each participant agrees, an explanation of the project happens. Stringer writes, "At every stage of their work, research facilitators should ensure that procedures are in harmony with these guidelines, constantly checking that their actions promote and support people's ability to be active agents in the processors of inquiry."<sup>291</sup> The non-participant group will be a little harder to determine whom to ask to participate because it entails most of the church. A key element in this task is to choose

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<sup>288</sup>Sills, *The Missionary Call*, 25.

<sup>289</sup>Ibid.

<sup>290</sup>Peters, *A Biblical Theology*, 114.

<sup>291</sup>Stringer, *Action Research*, 75.

people who are adults and teenagers of all age ranges. It is vital to choose various people from across all demographics to come from all angles to get the best information from the questions asked. This project's primary goal is to see and hear the answers to "why" they do not participate in short-term missions. The more participants, the more quality answers attained for the project. The answers will then lead to many themes from the answering of the questions. This plan constitutes the qualitative research for this project, and the answers can lead to a better short-term mission ministry at Cypress. As Sensing writes, "Keep the picture of our audience before you throughout the writing process. The primary audience of your DMin [Doctorate of Ministry] thesis is the DMin Committee."<sup>292</sup>

#### Current Team

The project manager led a team to Merida, Mexico, in October. There are twenty-one participants on this team, and the team meetings and trip fall right in the middle of the data-gathering stage for this project. This team consists of a wide range of ages, with several who have been on many short-term mission trips. Several are going on their first international mission trip. This team holds a single objective of getting to go on a mission to Mexico. Greene writes, "Your only duty is to be faithful."<sup>293</sup> Because of their focus, this team is ready to help missions in Mexico. This team is valuable because it is a versatile team of age groups—teenage to senior adult—first-time missionaries and seasoned short-term missionaries. The team permitted the project manager to participate in this project. Since all of the current team members have already permitted their participation, they will fill out the questionnaire at the next meeting with discussion. This plan will begin the intervention process. The discussions will center around why

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<sup>292</sup>Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 5.

<sup>293</sup>Greene, *A Guide to Short-term Missions*, 13.



many do not choose to go and how that can be changed to see more involved in short-term missions. Sensing writes, "Your role is not to impose people to change. This is done by addressing issues that concern them now."<sup>294</sup> The questionnaire's design is to understand how to recruit more participants in seeing their perspective on why many are not going. While in Mexico, the on-the-field data gathered will benefit this project in many ways also.

#### Location of Group Meetings

The ministerial staff and the administrative staff of Cypress have changed a lot over the last several years. Because of this, the conference room is bigger to allow for more people. It is named the Nell Bice Conference Room. This room is a perfect set-up for any meetings needed with groups for this project. The glass board will help write significant themes from discussions of the questionnaires, especially the team going to Mexico. The church calendar is where the reservation for the conference room will take place for availability. This room is an excellent set-up for discussion in group settings.

#### Follow-up Meeting

There is also another critical element to this particular group that is going to Mexico. Because of Covid-19 and the uncertainty of knowing whether there would be another short-term mission trip from Cypress in 2020, this team got a late start in preparation. Meetings before and after the trip are essential to getting the feedback needed. Stringer writes, "As people reveal relevant details of their situation, they see more clearly the ways in which the research problem or focus is linked to features of their organizational, professional, and/or community lives."<sup>295</sup>

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<sup>294</sup>Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 42.

<sup>295</sup>Stringer, *Action Research*, 103.

The looming question remains throughout this project of why many choose not to go on short-term mission trips through Cypress's ministry.

Mexico has a bright future for Cypress, as well as the other partnerships Cypress currently has. Geoffrey Hartt writes, "Each partner is intrinsically motivated to meet the other's needs out of love for one another."<sup>296</sup> The Mexico team returned in mid-October, and their return brought a fresh perspective to understand recruitment for the future of short-term missions at Cypress. Their answer to why they chose to go will help with future communication for future trips Cypress will offer. Also, recruiting is a crucial issue based on this project. Upon returning, their answers will reinforce the previous answers before going to Mexico and add to the present themes or present new themes to the project.

#### Groups Determined

The formation of different age groups from within the church gives a broad perspective of the whole church. These different age groups are as follows: high school, 20-29 age range, 36-45 age range, 45-59 age range, and 60 and over age range. These potential participants are then contacted by phone to explain the project and see if they would be involved in the project. Once they say yes to participate, their e-mail is requested, and the project manager sends the questionnaire to them. Everybody in Cypress has a voice, and the project manager needs to hear from those voices. Peters writes, "Most certainly, every believer has a vital spiritual ministry to fulfill."<sup>297</sup> The e-mail message said a big thanks to all participants with a short explanation of the project's purpose. It also gave a timeline of when the answers to the questionnaire needed returning. The questions asked will be centered around how they see Cypress's missions, why

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<sup>296</sup>Geoffrey Hartt, *Churches on Mission: God's Grace Abounding on Mission* (Littleton, CO: William Carey Publishing, 2017), 305.

<sup>297</sup>Peters, *A Biblical Theology*, 174.

they choose not to go, what it would take for them to sign-up for a trip, and what they are looking for in a trip. Stringer writes, "The first question—why—provides a general orientation to the focus of the investigation, whereas succeeding questions—what, how, who, where, and when—enable participants to identify associated influences."<sup>298</sup> The discussion will also be about how Cypress can do better at communicating trips. The emphasis is to understand why some choose not to go and how Cypress can involve members in the ministry of short-term missions.

These groups are not specific to a particular group within Cypress—as in a Senior Adult Sunday School class or Young Married Sunday Class—because it is important not to focus too much data from one group over another. First, they need to be members who are attending. The participants need to be members who attend Sunday School and Sunday morning worship consistently. Greear writes, "The gospel's most powerful advance in the book of Acts come via the hands of regular people."<sup>299</sup> Ultimately the goal is to see more members, no matter where they are in their walk of faith, actively participating in short-term missions. In order to do this better, quality information needs obtaining. So, in choosing participants who have not participated in short-term missions at Cypress, it is essential to communicate with those who will be dependable to return the questionnaire with thoughtful answers. Everyone asked and agreed to participate is kept in the project manager's notebook and computer and will only be seen by the project manager. The people asked to participate come from different age groups within the church to help get more accurate results. In determining the participants, it is vital to have input from the different ministers on Cypress staff who will help determine whom to ask to participate.

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<sup>298</sup>Stringer, *Action Research*, 124.

<sup>299</sup>Greear, *Gaining by Losing*, 102.

Sego writes, "With such an established goal, the work done on the front end of the effort will determine the level of effectiveness on the back end."<sup>300</sup>

### Detailed Schedule

The project approval through the Internal Review Board of Liberty University happened in July 2020. Between July and August, the project manager improved the first part of the thesis based on the mentor's feedback. He also began compiling a list of potential participants from ministry staff members for this project. As the class began toward the end of August, the project manager learned to gather qualitative results and write the methodology, intervention, and implementation based on the thesis and purpose statements. Sensing writes, "Your project should grow out of theological principles."<sup>301</sup> In the writing of this detailed plan, the project is not just beginning, but it is ongoing. There are approximately 80-100 prospective participants for this project. The contact of the participants began and went through the first half of September. These participants are all people who have not participated in the short-term missions at Cypress. The review of the list for those who are active in short-term missions began in September. All of them have agreed to participate, and the sending of the questionnaire happened. Their input on why many choose not to go and how to recruit more is vital to this project. Platt writes of Jesus, "All he needed was to revolutionize the hearts of a few, and they would impact the world."<sup>302</sup> All of the participants' information is anonymous. Besides questionnaires, interviews are being set-up and scheduled over the next few weeks. Some of these will be through a zoom conference call

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<sup>300</sup>Sego, "Developing a Small Group Teaching Module," 38.

<sup>301</sup>Sensing., *Qualitative Research*, 22.

<sup>302</sup>Platt, *Radical*, 88.

because the interviewee is out of town. These consist of Cypress staff members, a Missions Pastor in the area, and staff members of 410Bridge and Servantlife.

### Questions

The questions for the questionnaires have all been formed and approved by the IRB of Liberty. Why a person would choose to go or why they choose not to go will be of central focus initially in these groups. For the group that continually chooses to go, the “why” question will be of utmost importance. Each group has a different set of questions to answer based on their involvement in the project. Using the Socratic Method here will generate more answers to drive to more specific themes for the project. Roxburgh and Romanuk write, “An important role of a missional leader is cultivating an environment within which God’s people discern God’s direction and activities in them and for the communities in which they find themselves.”<sup>303</sup> The Project manager must cultivate the proper people for the data. For example, a person who has never been on a short-term mission trip cannot answer why they chose to go to a particular destination when they have not chosen anything. The non-participants in short-term mission trip questions formed can bring many different answers to having a genuine understanding from all individuals involved in the future ministry of short-term missions at Cypress. Sills writes, “First, while the Bible does not mention the missionary call, it certainly describes God’s heart for the nations and for his desire to join Him on mission.”<sup>304</sup> With the number of people involved in this project, themes should arise to have well thought out quality answers. The results will point straight back to the project's methodology of finding out why more do not go on short-term mission trips. The results are about Cypress Baptist Church moving forward and becoming

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<sup>303</sup>Roxburgh and Romanuk, *The Missional Leader*, 16.

<sup>304</sup>Sills, *The Missionary Call*, 199.

missional. As Matt Chandler writes, "We stand as part of God's restoring of all things, and we are brought into the missional witness to God restorative gospel, the body of Christ."<sup>305</sup> How are arrangements made based on the individual's calendar and financial means? How can Cypress do better at recruiting and communicating their trips? What questions will be great for those who have never attended a trip? What needs to happen in order for others to be willing to consider at least going on short-term mission trips?

### Measuring Change

Measuring change in the discussion will center around questionnaires and interviews within the context of short-term missions. There is already a notebook used for keeping records of all asked to participate. The notebook shows who has agreed to participate and what group they are part of when looking at the results. The notebook shows who needs interviewing and a reminder to set an appointment with them. Within each group of questionnaires and groups, themes that emerge will be kept in detail in the notebook to use for the results and application in this project's future. The data from questionnaires are on file that only the project manager will access during this project and even when this project is over. Although this project is not a study of actual human behavior or the human body, this project is still studying humans and their behavior within the context of short-term missions at Cypress Baptist Church. Carpenter continues by writing, "Many believed they were changed and developed more than the people they were serving."<sup>306</sup> Understanding that serving changes a person is something all believers need to experience through short-term missions. The interviews will be recorded either on a separate recording device when interviewed or through the zoom meetings. No one will have

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<sup>305</sup>Chandler, *The Explicit Gospel*, 182.

<sup>306</sup>Carpenter, "The Effect Participation on a Short-term Mission Trip," 90.

access to the recording devices, but the project manager during and after the project. Data collected will be kept no more than three years based on IRB protocol, but the results will hopefully change the ministry of short-term missions at Cypress for the future. Through these results, the project manager should lead short-term missions at Cypress in a direction that sees more engaging the nations. Robert Lewis and Wayne Cordeiro write, "First, realize a shift is needed. Next, identify the culture you want to have."<sup>307</sup>

### **Implementation of the Intervention Design**

Implementing the intervention design laid out above will begin with the thesis project designer having conversations with those in authority to have proper permission to continue this project. The main conversation that needs to happen is with the Senior Pastor of Cypress Baptist Church, John Fream. Pastor Fream is aware of the project itself, but not the project's specifics, and that the project manager is working on his DMin. Pastor Fream will need information on all areas of the project as far as the ministry studied, the church members who could potentially be involved, and all of the interviews that will take place. John's position allows the other ministers to achieve what God has called them to do. Andy Stanley writes, "God is using your circumstances to position and prepare you to accomplish His vision for your life."<sup>308</sup> The meeting with John happens right after IRB approval in August. Once Pastor Fream has been permitted to continue the project, there needs to be communication about setting an interview for his part. This interview takes place in September, and it happens in the Pastor's office. All meetings with John in his office because it is more conducive to interview type meetings. Recording of the interview is communicated ahead of time for permission. The recording will

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<sup>307</sup>Lewis and Cordeiro, *Culture Shift*, 109.

<sup>308</sup>Stanley, *Visioneering*, 43.

begin with the first question and stop after the interviewee stops answering the last question. The main focus of the interview with the Pastor will be on the "why" question. Why do they choose not to go? One of the primary purposes of the interview with John is that he is the Cypress vision caster in all ministry areas, meaning he is the main leader. This interview will be a great time to hear and write about his leadership for the future of short-term missions. Between questionnaires, interviews, and on the field data gathering themes will emerge to help gather results in addressing the problem presented. Fielding writes, "His passion is the same as that of the Holy Spirit, and he is constantly developing the mind of Christ."<sup>309</sup> This project is much deeper than a system for short-term missions at Cypress, and a simple system is not going to make the ministry of short-term missions grow at Cypress. The interview with Pastor John will allow growth in the project. Piper writes, "This is the promise that empowers us to take risks for the sake of Christ."<sup>310</sup> These are the questions that are part of the discussion with Pastor John Fream:

- What were missions like when you first came to Pastor at Cypress Baptist Church?
- What changes, if any, did you make immediately in reference to missions when you first came to Cypress?
- When did you first start making significant changes in missions at Cypress, and what were those changes?
- Why, in your professional opinion, do you think some choose to go on Cypress short-term mission trips, and why some choose not to go?
- What influences in the culture of North Bossier are keeping Cypress members from committing to short-term mission trips?
- What can Cypress do better at communicating and recruiting for trips?

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<sup>309</sup>Fielding, *Preach and Heal*, 79.

<sup>310</sup>John Piper, *Don't Waste Your Life* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2003), 97.



- What do you see for the future of Cypress in the area of short-term mission trips?
- What would you like to see short-term mission trips produce for the members of Cypress Baptist Church?

### Interviews

There will also be a few more interviews set up in the course of this project. One interview in particular that can be vital is a Missions Pastor who serves on a local church staff from this area. She is vital to this project because she has lived in this area most of her life, so her perspective as a Missions Pastor being from this area is an excellent addition to this project. She even has a good understanding of the culture of Cypress. Lewis and Cordeiro write, "Culture is the most important social reality in your church."<sup>311</sup> She has also served with 410Bridge for several years, that Cypress is currently serving to go to Kenya and Uganda. She will help gather information from all sides of this project because of her knowledge of working with other churches and the local church. The environment that she comes from helps this project because of her background in missions, living in the area, and understanding Cypress's demographics from an outsider's perspective. Lewis and Cordeiro write, "Nothing can substitute for direct contact with the everyday lives of people or getting their take on ministries they are involved with."<sup>312</sup> Her interview happens in the middle of September. It is in the project manager's office because of privacy issues, and the recording is in the same format as all interviews. Below are the main questions discussed with the Missions Pastor:

- How long have you served in a mission's capacity? Where have you served?
- What was the reason that you began serving in missions?
- As you have grown up in the North Bossier area, how have you seen missions evolve?

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<sup>311</sup>Lewis and Cordeiro, *Culture Shift*, 3.

<sup>312</sup>Ibid., 157.

- What do you think are the biggest hindrances and obstacles to going on short-term mission trips in the North Bossier area?
- What do churches need to do, in your opinion to make missions more of a priority in the North Bossier area?
- Why do people in this area not go on short-term mission trips?
- How can churches in this area do a better job of recruiting their church members to go on short-term mission trips?
- What training do churches need for short-term mission trips?
- How can churches work together in the North Bossier area to help missions focus on the community?
- Is there anything else you would like to add to this interview regarding short-term missions and churches in the North Bossier area?
- What are some training methods you use that are most effective for your short-term mission teams?
- What are some changes you see in participants once they return from a trip?
- What are some of the critical values of short-term mission trips?

As the interviews continue, they will include a staff member of Cypress who grew up in the area. She has been serving the Cypress family for almost fifteen years. She came to Cypress while she was in middle school and never left. She has a good understanding of the North Bossier Culture as well as the heartbeat of Cypress. Cypress members need to see Cypress leading as an example of churches from the New Testament like the churches in Jerusalem and Antioch and the other churches Paul help plant. Peters writes of Paul, "The apostle also praises the Philippians for having an active part in his ministry."<sup>313</sup> Michael F. Bird and Nijay K. Gupta write, "Paul presents Timothy and Epaphroditus as case studies or models of obedience to God

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<sup>313</sup>Peters, *A Biblical Theology*, 93.

and the gospel of Jesus Christ that is marked by humility and unity.”<sup>314</sup> The church of Philippi is an example for Cypress, and the current staff member can help with insight from another person’s perspective as to how Cypress is doing in this area of ministry. The current staff member is recorded in the same format as the other two interviewed. This interview takes place in mid-September, and it will be in the Mission Pastor's office for confidentiality purposes. At Cypress, there is a continual emphasis on the team, helping each other in every ministry area. With her background and understanding of Cypress, this interview will give great feedback to this project. Here are her questions to discuss with the staff member:

- What was life like growing up as a child and a member of Cypress Baptist Church?
- Do you recall how involved Cypress was in missions as you grew up in children and youth ministries of Cypress?
- What was your involvement in missions at Cypress?
- As you became an adult, how did missions change with the vision and mission of Cypress?
- In your time as a staff member of Cypress, what were missions like when you first came on staff? How has it evolved in your time here?
- What do you think are some of the obstacles that keep people from going on short-term mission trips with Cypress? Why do they choose not to go?
- What does the North Bossier Community help or inhibit others from being part of short-term missions?
- What do you like presently when it comes to missions that Cypress is doing?
- What would you like to see differently when it comes to missions at Cypress?
- How can Cypress do a better job of recruiting for short-term mission trips?
- What training would you like to see for short-term mission trips at Cypress?

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<sup>314</sup>Michael F. Bird and Nijay K. Gupta, *Philippians*. ed. by Ben Witherington III (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 99.

- Any other thoughts or ideas?

There will be two interviews explicitly organized for this project with outside ministries from Cypress. Priest writes, “Even the ability to travel far for mission marks a power differential, and short-term organizers also have the upper hand in deciding whom to help and how to help.”<sup>315</sup> Cypress has partnerships with 410Bridge and Servantlife, as discussed in chapter one. These ministries are incredibly vital in helping the Missions Pastor prepare, train, and go to Cypress's current partnerships. Servantlife has been helping the Missions Pastor go to Ukraine since 2006. Peters writes, "It should be noted that while the word *ekklesia* refers principally to the local body of believers or the local church, the symbols express more the idea of the church universal, the church ideal, the church of Jesus Christ as a whole.”<sup>316</sup> When writing about 1 Corinthians, Thomas R. Schreiner writes, "The baseline and the center for Paul is the gospel of Christ which proclaims forgiveness of sins through the crucifixion of Jesus.”<sup>317</sup> These ministries help Cypress do what Paul is exhorting Corinth to do. There will be a phone call to organize a Zoom meeting and time with the two primary contacts from these ministries that the Missions Pastor has been working with for several years. There is an established relationship and a good understanding of the Cypress culture and the Missions Pastor's heart. Their perspective will be unique from any other interview or discussion group in this project. Sensing writes. "Knowing what to observe and recording those observations are complementary activities.”<sup>318</sup> The discussion will be about

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<sup>315</sup>Priest, *Effective Engagement in Short-term Missions*, 192.

<sup>316</sup>Peters, *A Biblical Theology*, 142.

<sup>317</sup>Thomas R. Schreiner, *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*. vol. 7, ed. by Eckhard J. Schnabel and Nicholas Perrin (Downers Grove, IL.: InterVarsity Press, 2018), 66.

<sup>318</sup>Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 101.

partnerships and how to form them, and how do the relationships continue? What issues do other churches face compared to Cypress in participation and recruiting and how to recruit better? The big question of what they hear about why people are not going? Also, what life change are they seeing in those that go? Here are their questions to be discussed with the two parachurch staff members:

- Why are short-term mission trips so crucial for the local church?
- What and why is it vital for the local church to partner with a ministry like yours?
- What are some of the things you offer that the local church needs?
- In your view, what does the local church need to know about the importance of short-term mission trips?
- What do you offer that the local church does not have?
- What are the local church's obstacles that you see keep people from going on short-term mission trips?
- What can the local church do better at recruiting their members to go on short-term mission trips?
- How can churches train members for short-term mission trips?
- What life change do you see participants make as a result of going on short-term mission trips?
- Is there anything else you would like to say based on this subject?

### Focus Groups

Wolcott writes, "By identifying participant observation as the core research activity in qualitative inquiry, I have underscored not only the everyday nature of what we study but the everyday nature of the way we go about collecting data."<sup>319</sup> The focus groups' implementation

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<sup>319</sup>Harry F. Wolcott, *Writing Up Qualitative Research* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.) (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Ltd., 2009), 86.

will be intentional in furthering the ministry of short-term mission trips at Cypress. The questionnaire's questions will be broad in order that the participants can give more than one-word answers. The focus groups of active members in short-term missions and the current team going to Mexico answers to the questions are vital to this project. Cypress needs to see the church as a sending agent. Priest writes, "Surprisingly, the great missionary church of Acts 13 that sent out Paul and Barnabas on their first and subsequent missions to the Gentiles was not planted by the Apostles."<sup>320</sup> The use of all these different members from within Cypress helps Cypress members see Cypress as a sending church, just as in Acts 13. Lightfoot writes, "From Antioch, they receive their commission, from Antioch they set out, and to Antioch, they return and report their experiences."<sup>321</sup> This part of the project's primary purpose will be to determine why people choose to go or not to go and how the ministry of short-term missions at Cypress can continue to influence more people to go for the sharing of the gospel. All of the interviews and questionnaires help this thesis project continue as it grows. In reality, the project focuses on finding out why more members from Cypress do not go on short-term-mission trips. All of the questions lead to how Cypress can do a better job of presenting the trips and recruiting more to be more active in short-term missions and to have a more holistic approach to enhance short-term missions. The following are the non-participant questions:

- Why have you never been on a short-term mission for Cypress Baptist Church?
- What would it take, if anything, for you to go on a short-term mission trip with Cypress Baptist Church?
- How can Cypress do a better job of recruiting for short-term mission trips?

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<sup>320</sup>Priest, *Effective Engagement in Short-term Missions*, 39.

<sup>321</sup>J.B. Lightfoot, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Newly Discovered Commentary*. vol. 1. ed. by Ben Witherington III and Todd D. Still (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 168.

- What training would you like to see Cypress do for participants in short-term mission trips?
- How do you think the ministry of short-term mission trips could enhance Cypress and Cypress's other ministries?
- Do you think if you went on a short-term mission trip, it would make a difference in your life? If so, what?
- Do you believe short-term mission trips make a difference in the participants and the church? What differences does it make?
- Why are there not more people from North Bossier from Cypress going on short-term mission trips?
- What obstacles need removing for you to go on a short-term mission trip?
- You may never go on a short-term mission trip from Cypress, and that is ok. What are a few more good points you would add to this to help me in recruiting and training to see more people involved in the ministry of short-term missions?

This project needs eyes from people who have a perspective on missions. All five of the interviewees have experience in all levels of short-term missions. There are also people within Cypress who desire to go and a good understanding of the value of short-term missions. These are the people who will go to the nations with Cypress every chance they can get. There is a Biblical understanding of building relationships with other cultures, and the desire is to do it in as many places possible with as many as possible. Livermore writes, "Rather, in an attempt to relate to the people, we meet, we strive to interact in meaningful and appropriate ways."<sup>322</sup> The active members in short-term missions at Cypress members create a particular focus group for the questionnaires to understand why many choose not to go. Bartosz Adamczewski writes, "The subsequent idea of going and making disciples of all the nations, which was borrowed from LK

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<sup>322</sup>Livermore, *What Can I Do?*, 106.

24:47, alludes to the subsequent Luan idea of being sent to the nations."<sup>323</sup> Luke 24:47 echoes Acts 1:8 to go to the nations with repentance beginning in Jerusalem or at home. First, this group sees how trips from the beginning of planning a trip to the post-trip meetings after returning, exactly how things go with Cypress's short-term missions and why the trips are vital. Input is given many times and used by many different people; a concerted effort needs to bring all of the information to help this project. Their discussion will center around the following questions:

- Why did you decide to go on your first short-term mission trip with Cypress?
- What plans and/or changes did you have to make to be able to go?
- Why did you choose this particular country?
- What impacted you the most about your short-term mission trip?
- What, if any, changes did you make in your life once you returned?
- Would you go back, and why would you go back?
- What changes in preparation would you like to see for your next trip?
- How can Cypress do a better job of recruiting members for short-term mission trips?
- What would you like to see for the future of short-term missions at Cypress?
- If you have been on several trips, why? Why do you keep going?
- What have you learned from the many trips?
- How has your life been significantly impacted by short-term mission trips?
- What would you like to say to the church so that more people will participate in short-term mission trips?
- What in our community and church hinders people the most from going on short-term mission trips?
- Do you plan to attend more short-term mission trips through Cypress, and why?

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<sup>323</sup>Bartosz Adamczewski, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Hypertextual Commentary*. vol. 16 (Frankfurt, DE: Peter Lang Edition, 2017), 198.



- This project's primary focus is to understand why many choose not to go on short-term mission trips. What is one of a few things that you would say would help Cypress see more people involved in short-term mission trips?

### On-Field Information

In October of 2020, the project manager will lead a team to Merida, Mexico—one of Cypress's partners through Servantlife—on a six-day short-term mission trip. However, team members will bring value to the project while actually on the field serving in Mexico. Within the preparation, the team went through training to have a proper perspective on short-term missions and Mexico's actual work. While in Mexico, the project manager will meet with various groups to discuss why more are not going and how the project manager can help alleviate those reasons for the future. Occhipinti writes of short-term mission trip travelers, "They do not expect to change the world, but they do hope that they can have an impact on someone's life."<sup>324</sup> The benefit of meeting with these groups will bring about pointed answers directing to this project's thesis and purpose. Because there are seasoned travelers on this team with first-time travelers, the gathered data will come from different perspectives helping this project's thesis. Occhipinti continues, "As I have reflected more on short-term mission, I have come to believe that it provides a way for American participants to understand poverty, to understand their own culture, and to begin to think about framing relationships that bridge divides of class and geography."<sup>325</sup> Mexico is a new partnership, but it has enormous potential to see more Cypress members involved as the partnership grows. The assumption is that time and money are big reasons many do not attend short-term mission trips with Cypress. Simply, it is a short distance, which means

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<sup>324</sup>Occhipinti, "Not Just Tourist," 119.

<sup>325</sup>Ibid., 120

less travel and possibly fewer days in the country, and the cost to go is much cheaper than any of the other projects. Sills writes, "While we may invent and imagine some hindrances, others are very real."<sup>326</sup> Fewer days off work and less money make it an ideal trip no matter where someone lives. There are also many projects to be done in-country that many people can go and use their gifts to glorify God. The notebook and the computer for the project will be with the project manager. The project manager will keep all field notes and only be for the project manager's eyes and ears.

### Analyzation

As this project continues with the gathered information, the knowledge gained can apply to future trips. First, the future is about understanding why many choose not to go on short-term mission trips from Cypress. Howell writes, "For many of the proponents of STM, the rhetoric of globalization is central to their understanding of why and how these trips serve Christian purposes."<sup>327</sup> In coming into a knowledge of the "why" many choose not to go, the answer to the question leads to the fruitful application of seeing the ministry of short-term mission trips to enhance all of Cypress Baptist Church's ministries. Analyzation of the results is essential for so many different reasons. There needs to be a system in place highlighting the results first, understanding how the project manager can systematically apply the result, and better explaining to the reader how to comprehend the results in a simple format. NVivo is the chosen resource the project uses for input for the qualitative research from this project. NVivo will be useful in concisely showing the data pooled results, accessible for all to understand and apply. NVivo allows the project manager to input all of the questionnaires and interviews, which gives graphs

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<sup>326</sup>Sills, *The Missionary Call*, 144.

<sup>327</sup>Howell, *Servant of Servants*. 228.

showing the results. The results produce themes that come from the gathered data. The graphs shown illustrate the "why" many are choosing not to go. NVivo is ordered and downloaded to the project manager's computer, and it will only be used and seen by the project manager except for the posted results in the project in chapter four.

Recruiting is a significant portion of the discussion groups. Trips are always on the calendar, and the implementation of recruiting will be invaluable. It is not enough to just put an information meeting on the calendar, so in gathering data, it becomes crucial to know what needs doing to see more engaged globally at Cypress. This project is not about numbers but finding out why more do not go to help dispel some of the reasons and themes to see more involved. Greear writes, "Jesus launched a *global* mission, and when he saves a person, he sweeps them up immediately into that mission, global dimensions and all."<sup>328</sup> The project manager is passionate about missions, and as Lewis and Cordeiro write, "If we don't live out our values, then we won't pass them on."<sup>329</sup> Also, why many are not going will help the project manager adjust trips in all aspects to include more people in short-term missions at Cypress—applying the "how" of short-term missions will hopefully change many future trips. The result can give insight into how to disciple Cypress members in missions. How is the ministry of short-term missions done at Cypress, proper or improper? How can one prepare better for the trips? With answers from these and many more questions, the ministry of short-term-mission trips can be even more significant as the future comes. Inputting all of these results into NVivo will show results for application to Cypress's short-term missions ministry for many years to come. Moving forward, the project manager will interview, recruit participants for questionnaires and discussions, and gather data

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<sup>328</sup>Greear, *Gaining by Losing*, 50.

<sup>329</sup>Lewis and Cordeiro, *Culture Shift*, 84.

while on the field in Mexico. Using questionnaires, interviews, and on the field data, the information produces a triad to correlate. These three data gathering ways then allow for specific results understanding more of Cypress's heartbeat as a whole when it comes to short-term missions.

The best way to implement the intervention knowledge is to have an ongoing application for this project. Kibbe writes, "Your paper needs to demonstrate three things: that you are aware of the conversation, that you understand the conversation, and that you can participate in that conversation."<sup>330</sup> The thesis's bottom line is to find out why Cypress members are not participating in the opportunities given for short-term mission trips. The purpose here is to seek answers by listening to Cypress's people and then beginning the process of expelling the excuses, reasons, or fears given for not participating. Once achieving results for the project, it will be time for the project manager to apply them. Stanley writes, "Before you can successfully cast your vision to another person or group of people, you must have a firm grip on current reality."<sup>331</sup> The project is about knowing the reality of why many are choosing not to go on short-term missions through Cypress. This reality might mean giving, praying, or teaching classes on how to be engaged in missions. For some, what the missions pastor learns from this project's study will be the encouragement they need to take for their first trip internationally.

Every time Cypress forms a new trip, the knowledge gained should be applied to each trip. After all, the groups have turned in their questionnaires, and the interviews are complete, everything can be changed and laid out for all trips. Each trip generally begins months before the

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<sup>330</sup>Michael Kibbe, *From Topic to Thesis: A Guide to Theological Research*. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2016), 88.

<sup>331</sup>Stanley, *Visioneering*, 81.

trip takes place. Because of this planning, the wisdom gained will allow for monitoring and application to see the ministry of short-term mission trips at Cypress become even more vital than they already are. McGuinness writes, "We do not need to start a new work; instead, we need to join the work God is already doing."<sup>332</sup> Each trip then becomes better prepared to recruit more Cypress members and see teams better trained as defined by this project's results.

### Conclusion

Through the intervention and implementation, this project's future lays a strong foundation for Cypress Baptist Church as the ministry of short-term missions continues to grow at Cypress. The intervention has laid out many contacts and meetings that will take place as this project continues. The questionnaires are done and approved, and the people of Cypress are beginning to receive the questionnaires. The intervention process is about seeking input from participants, non-participants, church staff, and outside ministry consultants to gain the most knowledge of why Cypress members as a whole are not participating in short-term missions. H. Leon Greene writes, "It is important to acknowledge that there are valid questions that are asked about the utility and appropriateness of short-term missions."<sup>333</sup> The interview schedule is set-up and ready to meet with the five individuals either through zoom or live in-person meetings. The recording of the interviews happens with an app on the project manager's cell phone. On the field data is crucial because, in the discussion groups, the information given will be fresh and relevant, being that it is in the middle of a mission trip. Missions must permeate all of Cypress. Greear

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<sup>332</sup>McGuinness, *Walk this Way*, 38.

<sup>333</sup>Greene, *A Guide to Short-term Missions*, 8.

writes, "No blessing that God gives His people is separated from the responsibility to become a blessing to the nations."<sup>334</sup>

NVivo displays results in a manner of understanding not only to the project manager but also to anybody who reads this thesis project. The project manager's goal is to listen and hear the reasons why Cypress members choose not to engage in short-term missions. The participants have real reasons, and they need to be received and listened to by the Missions Pastor. Then a communication process needs to begin to help ease the reasons to allow all to be part of the mission's ministry at Cypress. NVivo will show these results and help the Missions Pastor see what Cypress's people say and feel as he continues to minister to them. Greear writes, "Some of us may never be able to go to foreign lands ourselves, but deep in our hearts is a desire to see his glory cover the earth the way the waters cover the ocean floor."<sup>335</sup>

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<sup>334</sup>Greear, *Gaining by Losing*, 154.

<sup>335</sup>*Ibid.*, 152.

## Chapter 4

### Results

#### Data Gathered

The problem with short-term missions at Cypress Baptist Church is in a large, almost mega-church, there should more people signing up to go on short-term mission trips through the ministry of short-term missions. The purpose is to analyze data to determine why this is happening and search for ways to alleviate these reasons. Through interviews, questionnaires, and on the field data, the project will conclude why people do not go on mission trips through Cypress as a sending unit. There is a theory by the project manager behind why many are choosing not to go, but it is still a theory until the project and study are complete. Rodney Reeves writes, "We could think of several reasons, but one seems to be the most obvious: we believe we can fulfill the Great Commission because we have ears to hear and eyes to read Matthew's Gospel."<sup>336</sup>

The goal is to find the problem areas and seek solutions to have a systematic approach to applying all of the findings. The end goal is to see Cypress members know the investment a short-term mission trip brings to both people groups. Laurie A. Occhipinti writes, "But more commonly, the participants whom I spoke to are motivated by the desire to build a genuine connection, a relationship, with those in need."<sup>337</sup> There is a sentiment the project manager feels needs to be communicated to the members of Cypress. Occhipinti writes, "They want to know the people they are helping. Participants want the time and money that they spend to be effective,

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<sup>336</sup>Rodney Reeves, *The Story of God Bible Commentary: Matthew*. ed. by Tremper Longman III and Scott McKnight (Grand Rapids, MI, 2017), 565.

<sup>337</sup>Laurie A. Occhipinti, *Making a Difference in a Globalized World: Short-Term Missions that Work* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2014), 119.

and they want to invest not just their money, but also their sense of self, their heart, and their compassion.”<sup>338</sup> The results show there is a life-change that comes with investing in the gospel and the church. The data gathered will help communicate with Cypress members the value of short-term missions for their own lives.

### Themes from the Data

First, as the data analysis from within the project, several themes emerged from the interviews, questionnaires, focus groups, and on the field data. All of the information gathered centered around this project's thesis to ultimately determine why people are not committing to short-term mission trips through Cypress. Below is an initial chart showing the different themes that emerged from the data gathered. Each area has an overall theme, choices made to go, preparing for now and the future, the call to go, and God's call on the believer with two underlying themes to illustrate the findings. Each box's size shows the themes' emphasis and how much the participants highlighted all of the findings from the different ways data accumulated for this project. The giant box illustrated here is the "choices not to go box." Sharon R. Hoover writes, "Numerous factors contribute to the mixed reputation of short-term mission projects."<sup>339</sup> The reason this area is largest is this is where most of the data gathered focused on all questionnaires and interviews. The chart below shows the diversity with Cypress when it comes to the subject of short-term missions. Hoover writes, "On one end of the continuum are those who believe that short-term mission teams can effectively work alongside a missionary or mission organization to multiply their ministry in the community."<sup>340</sup> When done right, short-

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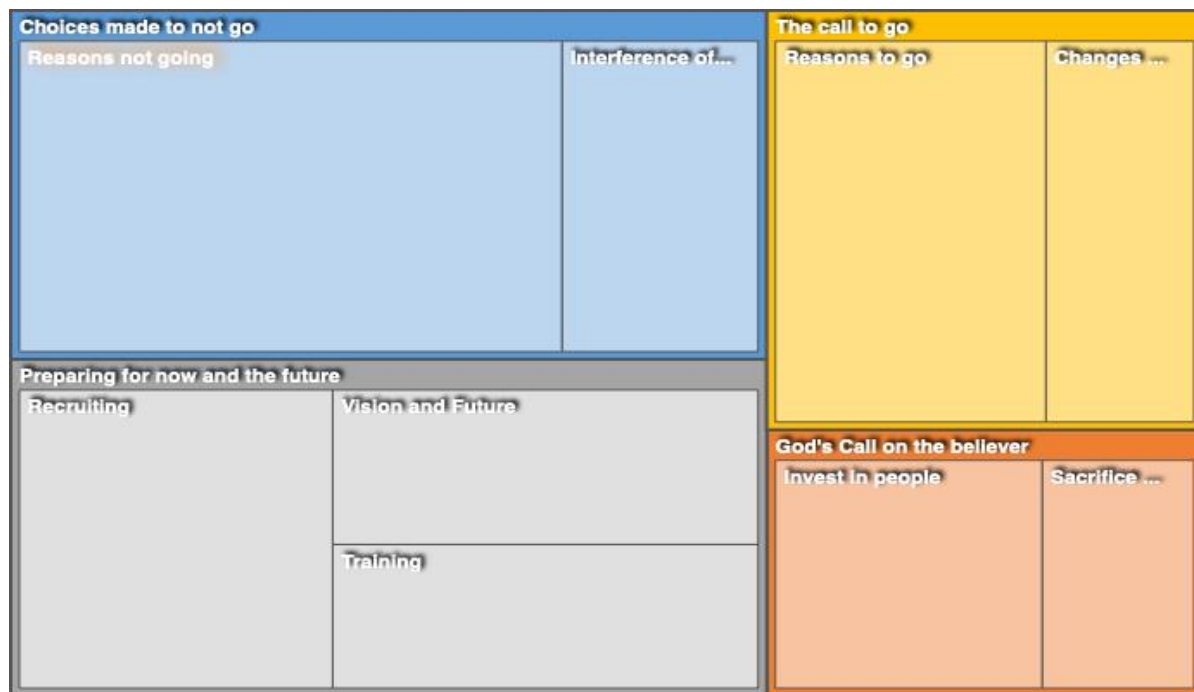
<sup>338</sup>Occhipinti, *Making a Difference in a Globalized World*, 120.

<sup>339</sup>Sharon R. Hoover, *Mapping Church Missions: A Compass for Ministry Strategy* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2018), 97.

<sup>340</sup>Hoover, *Mapping Church Missions*, 97.



term missions achieve this goal and many more. This is why there should not be a reason not to go or an interference keeping someone from going.



This chart also illustrates more reasons or excuses not to go than there are reasons to go. Hoover writes, "Critics argue that short-term mission participants are merely searching for a vacation with a purpose rather than serving to support needs on the mission field."<sup>341</sup> This chapter's discussion seems to be a recurring theme on a mindset that needs to be changed. Ultimately, the smallest box theme, "God's call on the believer," is a big reason for Cypress to go to the nations. The underlying theme missed here is about investing in people and making sacrifices. Roberto Sigcho writes, "Missions is about walking in obedience."<sup>342</sup> F. F. Bruce writes, "The obedience that is based on faith in Christ. The 'faith' here is not the gospel or the

<sup>341</sup>Hoover, *Mapping Church Missions*, 98.

<sup>342</sup>Conversation with Roberto Sigcho, 2020. The missionary who led the Cypress Mexico mission team.

body of doctrine presented for belief, but the belief itself.”<sup>343</sup> Believing in Christ should bring a walk of obedience. F. F. Bruce continues writing, “When a person truly trusts Christ, he or she will obey Him.”<sup>344</sup> There is an investment in relationships that can go far beyond just a trip, but a relationship through the bond of Christ formed can last a lifetime.

Brian M. Howell writes, "Some have tested the assertion that STM produces stronger support for long-term missions."<sup>345</sup> This view stands on the foundation that short-term missions are vital now and for the future of missions at Cypress. Howell continues by saying, "Much more common is the view that, while it is true that STM can be done poorly, with proper training, the benefits for both hosts and travelers outweigh the costs."<sup>346</sup> So, ultimately the reasons to go should far outweigh the reasons not to go. To invest in a relationship long-term, it takes sacrifice. It takes a continual investment into another person's life over a long period. In Exodus chapter three, God called Moses to go Pharaoh to free the Israelites. This encounter took investment, but it primarily took sacrifice because of a trust in the relationship Moses had with God. Ralph Langley writes, “Now for Moses must come not only what to do in Egypt/but more basic still: his relationship to the Lord in his all-important mission. Otherwise, it will remain mission impossible!”<sup>347</sup>

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<sup>343</sup>F. F. Bruce, *Romans: An Introduction and Commentary*. vol. 6 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 80.

<sup>344</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, *Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the New Testament* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1992), 363.

<sup>345</sup>Brian M. Howell, *Short-Term Mission: An Ethnography of Christian Travel Narrative and Experience* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012), 200.

<sup>346</sup>*Ibid.*, 201.

<sup>347</sup>Ralph Langley, *Exodus*. ed. by H. Franklin Paschall and Hershel Hobbs (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1972), 55.

Data gathered in this project showed some ways to help recruit and hopefully see more involved in short-term missions. Educating Cypress through social media, video, and testimony in worship helps bring the church's trip and partnerships to the church. A visual shows that all have something to offer because a significant finding in the data is that many do not feel equipped to go on a short-term mission trip. Clint Archer writes it this way.

“Since Jesus’ Great Commission for Christians to go into all nations, making disciples, baptizing and teaching, a church’s desire to plant, support, and equip other distant churches is part of the DNA of the body of Christ. The compelling instinct to spread the gospel message and plant it firmly in foreign lands runs in our ecclesiastical blood. And the STM trip is as vital to the sustenance of the universal church as the circulatory system is to the human body.”<sup>348</sup>

Proper communication will help Cypress members go from those who do not go on short-term missions to those who go. R. T. France writes, “The description of the mission in terms of *making disciples* emphasizes this personal allegiance.”<sup>349</sup> Peters writes, “She [the church] was created on the day of Pentecost to serve as the embodiment of the Holy Spirit for the accomplishing of the purpose of God in this world.”<sup>350</sup>

#### References to Not Going

There are specific reasons why many choose not to go given through the questionnaires. The reasons for not going need to be alleviated because, as Duane Elmer writes, “Missiologists tell us that about one-half do not have a follower of Jesus in their community.”<sup>351</sup> That is around three billion people. Below is a bar graph that illustrates the number of reasons coded from the

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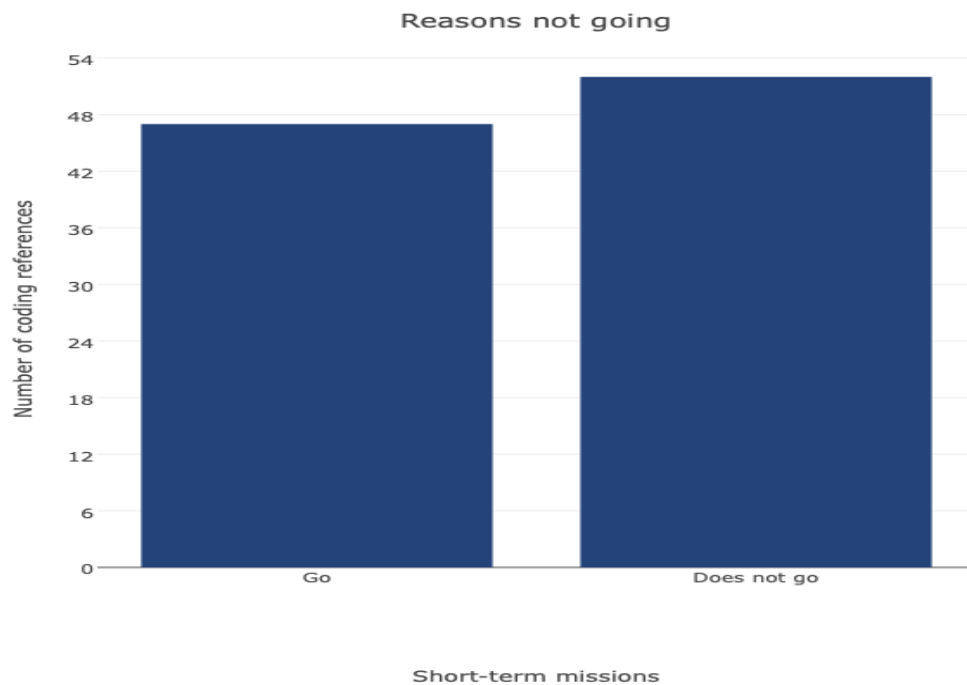
<sup>348</sup>Clint Archer, *Holding the Rope: Short Term Missions, Long Term Impact* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Publishing, 2014), 10.

<sup>349</sup>R. T. France, *Matthew: An Introduction and Commentary*. vol. 1 (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1985), 420.

<sup>350</sup>Peters, *A Biblical Theology of Missions*, 140.

<sup>351</sup>Duane Elmer, *Cross-Cultural Connections: Stepping Out and Fitting in Around the World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 19.

questionnaires and interviews. The bar graph shows there are many reasons Cypress members choose not to go on a short-term mission trip. There needs to be communication that brings this change of heart. Priest writes, "The church, as the body of Christ, participates in God's mission as an inclusive community."<sup>352</sup> Cypress is a sending church, but many are using the reason not to go as excuses that interfere with joining God's mission for Cypress. In the book of Acts, Jerusalem and Antioch became a sending church. In Acts 11:22<sup>353</sup>, there is a reference to the church in Jerusalem, sending Barnabas to Antioch. Stanley D. Toussaint writes, "Such an important move on the part of the church could not escape the attention of the mother church in Jerusalem. Earlier the Jerusalem apostles sent Peter and John to check up on Philip's ministry in Samaria. Now the Jerusalem saints sent Barnabas all the way to Antioch, over 300 miles




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<sup>352</sup>Priest, *effective Engagement in Short-term Missions*, 280.

<sup>353</sup>Acts 11:22 (NASB).

north.”<sup>354</sup> The Jerusalem church sends Barnabas to Antioch, and then Antioch sends him out with Paul. David E. Garland writes, "Christianity gains such a strong footing in Antioch that it becomes the center of the church's mission into the Greco-Roman world."<sup>355</sup> The Mission Pastor desires to see Cypress become a center for sending missionaries all over the world, just as in the Book of Acts.

Based on the data gathered, some overarching reasons emerged for why many do not choose to participate in short-term missions at Cypress. Below is a graph that gives specific numbers of reasons given for not participating. Finances emerged as a significant reason, but primarily through the interviews and other discussions, all the reasons many are choosing not to go comes from fear. Stuart D. Sacks fear, "One does not desire to come close to the being he fears."<sup>356</sup> It is the fear of the unknown, fear of being unsafe while abroad, fear of not knowing enough of the Bible to help others, fear of where the finances will come from, fear of leaving family, and fear of sharing the gospel. Roger Ellsworth writes, “We have, however, a tendency to think we know what constitutes our good. God’s definition of our good is different from our own. It is for us to be conformed to the image of his Son, and all that he does in our lives.”<sup>357</sup> As stated in chapter one of the thesis, Cypress members do not want to go because they are too busy doing everyday life to leave the country for a week. The chart below points to this statement

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<sup>354</sup>Stanley D. Toussaint, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures, Acts*. vol. 2, ed. by John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 383.

<sup>355</sup>David E. Garland, *Acts: Teach the Text Commentary Series*. ed. by Mark Strauss and John Walton (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2017), 131.

<sup>356</sup>Stuart D. Sacks, *Baker encyclopedia of the Bible*. vol. 1, ed. by Walter Elwell (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 178.

<sup>357</sup>Roger Ellsworth, *Opening Up Psalms* (Ryelands Road, Leominster: Day One Publications, 2006), 103.

based on answers centered around work, vacation, and time. Family life is a big reason used for many who do not participate. Wilson and Wilson write, "Our hope is that at an early age this generation will catch the vision for overseas missions."<sup>358</sup> Hoover writes, "I have talked with many people who question their individual roles as God's communicators."<sup>359</sup> The fear of being able to be used by God effectively stood out under this very reason. Pastor John Fream says, "The people want us to stay in Benton. There is a lack of understanding of urgency. There is a fear of food, culture, and flying. There are too many dangers in the world."<sup>360</sup>

The Bible uses the word fear over 300 times. David Brown, A. R. Faucet, and Bobby Jamieson write, "Fear is the result of 'the spirit of bondage.'"<sup>361</sup> Fear traps a person from carrying out God's plan for their life. John R. Stott writes, "Since he is the Spirit of power, we may be confident of his enabling as we exercise our ministry."<sup>362</sup> In 2 Timothy 1:7, Paul encourages Timothy to walk in "power, love, and discipline."<sup>363</sup> God has not called the believer to operate in fear. Ted Cabal writes, "Paul encouraged strength and confidence in God, since cowardice before nonbelievers might thwart gospel witness."<sup>364</sup> God desires the Christian to

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<sup>358</sup>Wilson David J. Wilson and Lorene Wilson, *Pipeline: Engaging the Church in Missionary Mobilization* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Press, 2018), 55.

<sup>359</sup>Hoover, *Mapping Church Missions*, 42.

<sup>360</sup>Interview with Pastor John Fream, Senior Pastor of Cypress Baptist Church.

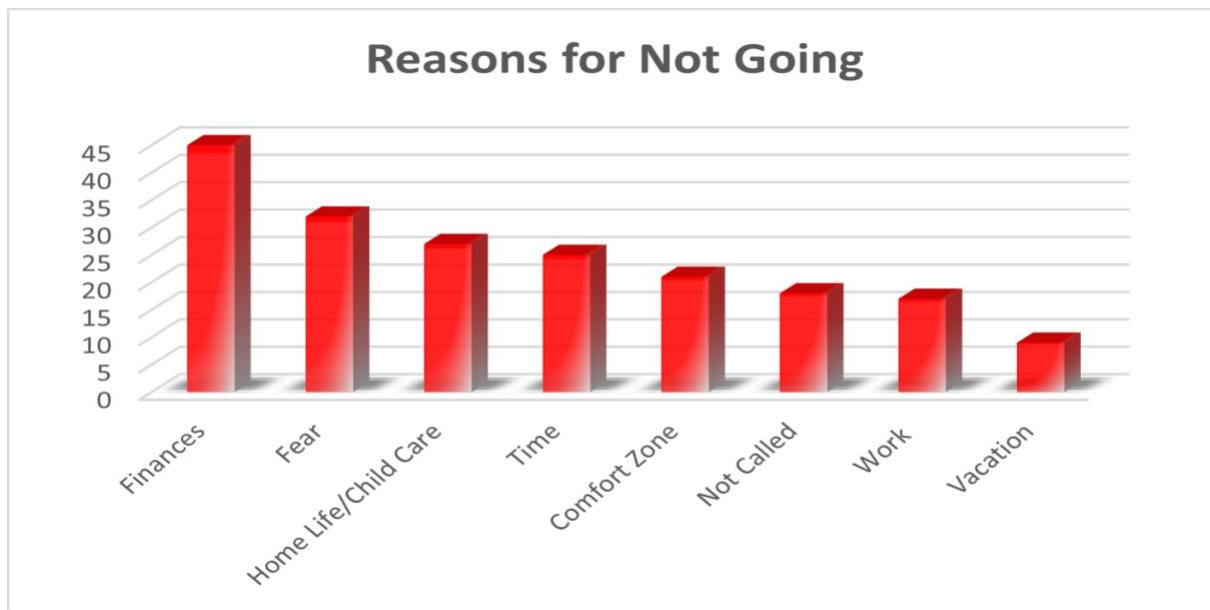
<sup>361</sup>David Brown, A. R. Faucet, and Bobby Jamieson, *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*. vol. 2 (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), 422.

<sup>362</sup>John R. Stott, *The Message of 2 Timothy: Guard the Gospel* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1973), 16.

<sup>363</sup>2 Tim. 1:7 (NASB)

<sup>364</sup>Ted Cabal, *The Apologetics Study Bible: Real Question, Straight Answers, Stronger Faith*. ed. by Chad Owen Brand, E. Ray Clendenen, Paul Copen, J. P. Moreland, and D. Powell (Nashville, TN.: Holman Bible Publishers, 2007), 1809.

walk in love and not fear, and that love should allow the believer to reveal Christ to others. When fear is gone, trust in God can take over. Raymond F. Collins writes, "Timothy has received the God-given gifts of strength to fight the good fight and good judgment to lead the community."<sup>365</sup> God is giving the same charge to Cypress today.



In discussing all of the themes that came from the data gathering, many reasons kept repeating throughout the process. Finances repeated itself in most questionnaires and interviews given. It was often associated with the fear of having the money. Leaving one's comfort zone was also mentioned several times. Elmer writes, "Sometimes we fail to see beyond our experience and fail to realize the vast array of differences."<sup>366</sup> Throughout the gathered data, it continually pointed out that many choose to be safe in their comfort zone. Although the reasons for the "why" many are choosing not to go are prevalent, many of the participants in this study would still point back to the "fear of the unknown" or "not wanting to leave one's comfort zone."

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<sup>365</sup>Raymond F. Collins, *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus: A Commentary*, ed. by C. Clifton Black, M. Eugene Boring, and John T. Carroll (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 2012), 199.

<sup>366</sup>Elmer, *Cross-Cultural Connections*, 21.

The thesis premise stated that many did not go because they did not want to sacrifice their time. Busyness, vacation time, and family life also were mentioned several times, all coming under the theme of time. God invites Cypress into His story. David Livermore writes, "God invites us to make the world a better place. That is the primary reason for us to get involved, globally."<sup>367</sup>

Some statements stood out in some ways more than others. The statements from the questionnaires and interviews about "being a heart issue" or "never feeling called to go" stem from a lack of understanding of obedience to Christ and the word calling. Obedience is the call of every believer. Psalm 37:4 reference "delighting in the Lord."<sup>368</sup> Tremper Longman III writes, "Rather than worrying about evil people, the godly should rest comfortably in the land. God will give them safety."<sup>369</sup> Delighting in the Lord is trusting to obey the Lord. Although there is no call for everyone to go on the mission field, the call is to engage in missions with the gospel. Sills writes, "Every believer is to pray for the nations and support the cause of missions, but not every believer is called to leave his homeland and go overseas. Some will send and support, and others will go and tell."<sup>370</sup> All believers are on God's journey corporately. Longman III writes, "One who delights in the Lord will have desires that conform to God's will for their lives."<sup>371</sup> Priest writes, "In other words, due to our identity as disciples of Jesus, all of us can and must participate in God's activity in the world."<sup>372</sup> Communication needs to come from leadership to

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<sup>367</sup>David Livermore, *What Can I Do? Making a Global Difference Right Where You Are* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 21.

<sup>368</sup>Psalm 37:4 (NASB).

<sup>369</sup>Tremper Longman III, *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary*. Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries. vol. 15-16, ed. by David G. Firth (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 178.

<sup>370</sup>Sills, *The Missionary Call*, 25.

<sup>371</sup>Ibid.

<sup>372</sup>Priest, *Effective Engagement in Short-term Missions*, 280.



involve more of Cypress in missions. Priest writes, "STM as a missional activity provides an opportunity for the laity to contribute to the extension of God's kingdom."<sup>373</sup> This part of the project shows that Cypress is not doing the job of keeping missions globally before the people. The results show a lack of education in understanding the Biblical call to go to the nations. Peters writes, "A sound Bible teacher will also be a mission's teacher, for missions is imbedded in the total trust of the Word of God."<sup>374</sup>

David and Lorene Wilson write, "When we slow down and count the costs of accepting the call of the Lord to go and serve in some distant land, we realize that it is utter foolishness in the flesh."<sup>375</sup> As this graph shows, whether someone goes on short-term mission trips or not, some reasons are causing obstacles for the person to hear the call and go. Cypress needs to hear these reasons and then be an agent of change to alleviate all reasons or excuses to keep believers from going to the nations. David and Lorene Wilson illustrate it well with this statement.

“For a brief synopsis, the word *mission* implies a task in which God sends a person whom he has called to introduce another group of people to salvation in Christ. The word *missionary* describes the person who goes. The church's mission is to deploy missionaries into all parts of the world until everyone has the opportunity to hear and respond to the message of Jesus. This the basis of the Great Commission.”<sup>376</sup>

Again, there are obstacles, and through proper discipleship, on short-term missions, a lot of the obstacles can be removed. M. S. Mills writes this based on Matthew 28:19-20, “You obviously cannot disciple anyone until they have believed; and having believed, they need to be instructed,

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<sup>373</sup>Priest, *Effective Engagement in Short-term Missions*, 280.

<sup>374</sup>Peters, 112.

<sup>375</sup>Wilson and Wilson, *Pipeline*, 12.

<sup>376</sup>*Ibid.*, 58.

encouraged, and matured so that they are adequately equipped to convert others.”<sup>377</sup> Ultimately, Cypress's leadership needs to lead the Cypress people to walk in obedience in Christ, and that obedience needs to grow as their relationship with Christ grows. David and Lorene Wilson write, "For those who are surrendered to the will of God in their lives, it is not a question of whether you will raise support but whether you will be obedient. When that question is answered, support raising just becomes one aspect of the job that God is calling you to in obedience."<sup>378</sup> Mills writes, “Believers are expected to adhere to all Christ’s teachings, regardless of personal preferences.”<sup>379</sup>

### Reasons for Going

In gathering results for this thesis project, many people who participated in the project referenced positive reasons for going on a short-term mission trip. Below is a graph that shows the results of these findings. The surprise from this is that relationships are the highest total from these themes. The comments were constant in referring to relationships built with team members—church members—, relationships with the host country, and the community built in both countries. The second-highest is the gospel, which is a desire to share the gospel with the nations. Gospel is intertwined with relationships because this graph shows the gospel builds relationships. As Cypress's vision for missions states to share the gospel and build the church, these two being the highest undergirds the vision. Warren W. Wiersbe writes, “While we thank God for every Christian ministry that is true to the Lord and His Word, whatever is done should

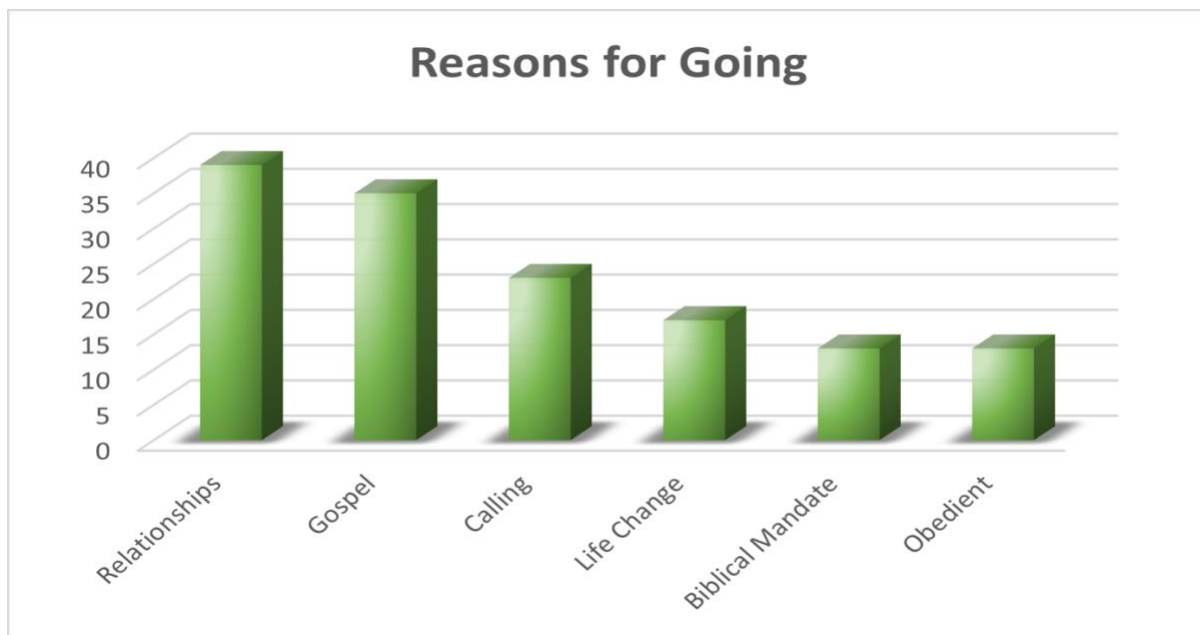
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<sup>377</sup>M. S. Mills, *The Life of Christ: A Study Guide to the Gospel Record* (Dallas, TX: 3E Ministries, 1999), 45.

<sup>378</sup>Wilson and Wilson, *Pipeline*, 66.

<sup>379</sup>*Ibid.*

be tied to the local church.”<sup>380</sup> The vision is what keeps participants engaged in short-term missions at Cypress. The next highest in the results is calling. Throughout the results, this word was used several times by many and in different connotations. It came down to knowing God's "call" on the believer and following that call to go to the nations on a short-term mission trip. Sills writes, "God's revealed will for Christians is found in the Great Commission. Unless you are providentially hindered, God's Word is plain that you are to go.”<sup>381</sup>



Looking at this graph, it points to some other healthy results. Life change is a strong theme, but it is associated with a reason to go after the trip's return. There is an assumption that life change will happen, and it really cannot be known without a long period of study. The Biblical mandate comes under simple references in the Bible and specific references from

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<sup>380</sup>Wiersbe, *Wiersbe's Expository Outlines*, 101.

<sup>381</sup>Sills, *The Missionary Call*, 83.

Matthew 28<sup>382</sup> and Acts 1:8<sup>383</sup>. Ted Cabal writes, "Luke's purpose in Acts was the empowerment by the Spirit to be Christ's witnesses in Jerusalem first, but expanding to reach "the ends of the earth"—the furthest extensions of the Roman Empire of the time."<sup>384</sup> In Luke 5<sup>385</sup>, the chapter begins with Jesus performing a miracle and then calling some of his disciples to follow him. It was an act of obedience for the disciples to follow Him. Pablo T. Caden writes, "Rather than specifying what they left in following Jesus (e.g., their nets, their boats, their father Zebedee), Luke simply says that they left everything, emphasizing the radical nature of Christian discipleship."<sup>386</sup> When studying the Bible based on these relationships built, it causes the believer to walk in obedience out of the relationship with Jesus.

#### On the Field Data

In October of 2020, right in the middle of collecting and writing results for this project, the project manager took a team to Mexico on a short-term mission trip. The trip was a perfect time to go to collect data while on the field of a short-term mission trip in the middle of this project. Howell writes, "Just as Paul sent Timothy to strengthen and encourage the Thessalonians in their faith (1 Thess. 3:2), we send out small teams of believers to bring encouragement."<sup>387</sup> This small team of believers gave firsthand experience and advice for those who could go to Mexico in the future, and even other short-term mission trips through Cypress.

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<sup>382</sup>Matt. 28 (NASB).

<sup>383</sup>Acts 1:8 (NASB).

<sup>384</sup>Cabal, *The Apologetics Study Bible*, 1620.

<sup>385</sup>Lk. 5 (NASB).

<sup>386</sup>Pablo T. Caden, *The Gospel of Luke*, ed. by Peter S. Williamson and Mary Healy (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2018), 101.

<sup>387</sup>Howell, *Short-term Mission*, 32.

The question was asked among different groups from the team on what counsel would they give to someone to encourage them to go on a short-term mission trip to Mexico. The first group asked the question gave some efficient advice on the subject. One team member said to advertise the trip as shorter, cheaper, and less time off work. This counsel goes right along with reasons people gave on the questionnaires on why they did not participate in short-term missions, with the top reasons being finances and fear. Hoover fear, "As we mature in our faith, we become more willing to trust the Lord with our time."<sup>388</sup> Another team member said that with one fundraiser, a third of the trip gets funded. Within this same conversation, the point was brought back up about calling, saying God desires all believers to be part of missions. There needs to be teaching about being called within the discipleship of short-term missions at Cypress. Isaiah experienced God's calling in Isaiah 6. He did not feel worthy, but God called him. C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch write, "Isaiah, whose anxiety to serve the Lord was no longer suppressed by the consciousness of his own sinfulness, no sooner heard the voice of the Lord, than he exclaimed, in holy self-consciousness, 'Behold me here; send me.'"<sup>389</sup> Adjusting one's schedule is essential in understanding short-term missions. As Hoovers writes, "Never anxious about tomorrow's needs today, our flexibility with plans and agenda demonstrates our faith in the Lord."<sup>390</sup> In recruiting, video and testimonies were ideas suggested. These ideas are a platform that has not been utilized yet with missions at Cypress. One of the team members mentioned advertising training gospel presentation sharing for each trip. As many questionnaires referred to

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<sup>388</sup>Hoover, *Mapping Church Missions*, 78.

<sup>389</sup> C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, vol. 7 (Peabody, MA: Hendrikson Publishing Inc., 1996), 129.

<sup>390</sup>*Ibid.*, 78.

not wanting to leave one's comfort zone, the participants from the project still suggested helping train those who go or potential members who might go. One team member mentioned how these trips stretch a person to prepare them to share the gospel at home. David and Loren Wilson write, "As mobilizers, we are responsible to be a proactive resource to real people and to facilitate their training and debriefing process."<sup>391</sup> As one team member said, the short-term mission trip is for the whole church. The point is that some think missions are just for a few, but the point made by this participant is that the trips are for the whole church to engage globally on some level. A group does missions within Cypress, and a group does not do missions within Cypress, and this gap between the two groups needs to be bridged. Hoover writes, "While all believers are called to go, God calls each of us in different ways."<sup>392</sup> Cypress has a responsibility to lead and help its members see and understand this calling. Romans 10:14 says, "How are they to believe in Him whom they have not heard?"<sup>393</sup> David S. Love and Benjamin Westerhoff write, "But yet ministers of the gospel, as Christ's servants and officers under him, are appointed to promote the designs of that great work of Christ, the work of salvation."<sup>394</sup> It is as Hoover writes, "As we align our mission's strategy with effective practice, the watching world observes the one true God. We serve to draw others into a reconciled relationship with him."<sup>395</sup> Reconciliation to the gospel is the ultimate purpose of missions, and this is why we, the ministry of short-term missions, exist at Cypress.

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<sup>391</sup>Wilson and Wilson, *Pipeline*, 72.

<sup>392</sup>Hoover, *Short-term Mission*, 160.

<sup>393</sup>Rom. 10:14 (NASB)

<sup>394</sup>David S. Lovi and Benjamin Westerhoff, *The Power of God: A Jonathan Edwards Commentary on the Book of Romans* (Cambridge, England: The Lutterworth Press, 2013), 138.

<sup>395</sup>*Ibid.*, 161.

In another session with team members while in Mexico, the discussion continued. One team member said Merida, Mexico is safe, intentional, deliberate, and versatile, is a strong reason to go to Merida, Mexico. They are explicitly saying that a person does not need a specific skill set and that Merida, Mexico, is family friendly. The trip is about openness. Duane Elmer writes, "Openness with people different from yourself requires that you are willing to step out of your comfort zone to initiate and sustain relationships in the world of cultural differences."<sup>396</sup> In the same meeting, another team member said that anybody could do something and all they need to do is contribute. Romans 12<sup>397</sup> is another chapter that deals with the gifts given by God to all believers. Douglas J. Moo writes, "God's giving to us is not simply a past basis for Christian obedience; it is its continuous source."<sup>398</sup> Obedience is about allowing God to use people in ways they did not know that God could use them in the capacity he does. Moreover, again, the idea of using more video to recruit is said during this session. The bottom line is that it does not matter what a person's gifts are, but all are gifted, and all have something to offer to make a short-term mission trip successful.

In the last session on the field in Mexico, the conversation continued around removing the reasons and excuses people are using, specifically Mexico, so that they can share the gospel. Team members agree that the community Cypress served in Mexico are hungry, hungry for the Lord. People need to be willing to serve. Elmer writes, "Serving is the ability to relate to people in such a way that their dignity as human beings is affirmed, and they are more empowered to

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<sup>396</sup>Duan Elmer, *Cross-Cultural Servanthood: Serving the World in Christlike Humility* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 38.

<sup>397</sup>Rom. 12 (NASB).

<sup>398</sup>Douglas J. Moo, *the Letter to the Romans*, ed. by Ned B. Stonehouse, F. F. Bruce, Gordon D. Fee, and Joel B. Green (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2018), 782.

live God-glorifying lives."<sup>399</sup> Within the conversation, it all came down to serving. Many people do not want to serve. There is an innate desire to serve oneself before serving others. The ministry of short-term missions is about removing the obstacles and loving on people outside of oneself. Andrew Knowles writes, "They must die to all their worldly ambitions, and place their hopes and reputations on a glory that's to come."<sup>400</sup> Cypress needs to sign-up and be available. Clint Archer raises a good point about churches and mission money. "So, is sending a team of our people to support our missionaries worth the money? Only if the church is on course with the destination of Jesus set for us two thousand years ago."<sup>401</sup> Communication needs to take place so people will agree to participate.

#### Changes Made

Short-term mission trips have the potential to allow believers in all seasons of life to grow in their faith. Archer writes, "Living in your hometown and being a good witness, kind neighbor, and model citizen is not 'missional,' it is Christian."<sup>402</sup> This mindset of being "missional" is prevalent among Christians in the North Bossier community. Many Cypress members are content where they are and do not see a need to take a step of faith and engage another culture to see these changes in their lives. Archer continues, "Missions, as our language has always defined it, is not a sedentary concept, but a mobile one."<sup>403</sup> By taking what Clint Archer writes here, many believers at Cypress share Jesus, but the next step is to become mobile.

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<sup>399</sup>Elmer, *Cross-Cultural Connections*, 146.

<sup>400</sup>Andrew Knowles, *The Bible Guide* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 2001), 481.

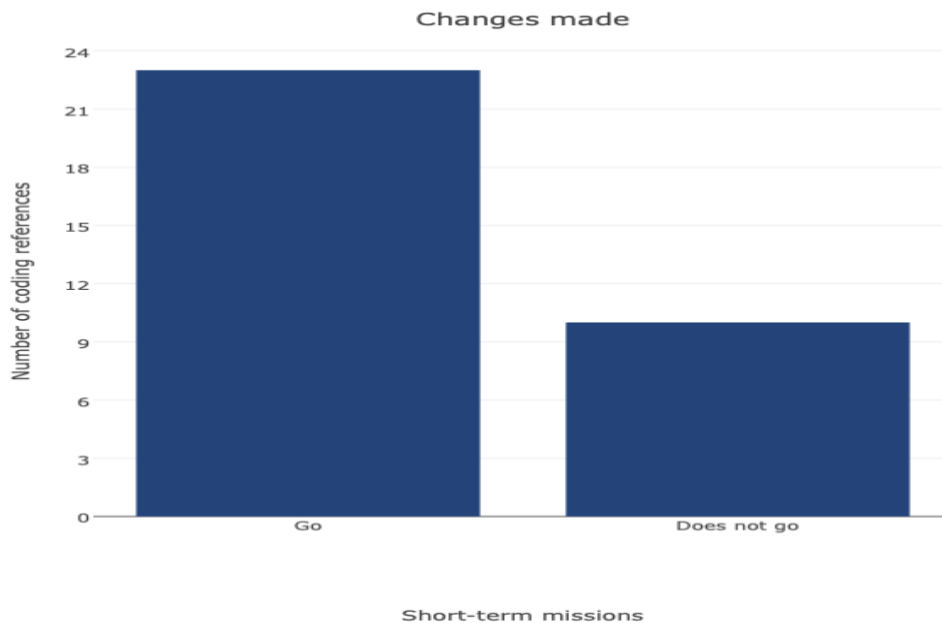
<sup>401</sup>Archer, *Holding the Rope*, 67.

<sup>402</sup>*Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>403</sup>*Ibid.*



See the graph below to understand what impact short-term mission trips can make on an individual's life.



When looking at this bar graph above, a few points stand out immediately from the project data. First, those that go on short-term mission trips see lasting change in their life. Second, many non-attendees said they believe it can offer lasting change but could not reference the change. The most significant change mentioned in the data referred to relationships as the number one reason to go. Relationships with the country visited, the team as a whole, and relationships within Cypress grew due to the trip. The second most significant change was the gospel. Many said they learned the intentionality of the gospel. Theodore S. De Bruyn writes, "The power of God, therefore, is that which invites people to the faith and grants salvation to everyone who believes; it forgives sins and justifies, so that those who have been signed with the mystery of the cross cannot be held by the second death."<sup>404</sup> Wilson and Wilson writes, "And

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<sup>404</sup>Bruyn, *Romans*, 22.

(Paul) was set apart by his fellow church leaders because they heard God's call to them as a body of believers to send these faithful missionaries on a journey as their representatives. In this instance, Paul was called and sent out by the church."<sup>405</sup> Cypress seeks to see the spiritual gifts in all members to send them out on mission for God to use them. Paul writes this in Romans 1:16 when saying do not be "ashamed"<sup>406</sup> of the gospel. The intentionality of the gospel brought stronger relationships in all facets of the trip. Howell writes, "Most called these trips 'life-changing' and 'eye-opening,' radically transforming the ways the travelers 'saw the world.'"<sup>407</sup>

Connecting relationships with people from other cultures almost always referred to them as "getting out of their comfort zone." Many non-participants do not see the purpose of relationships in the context of short-term missions. Howell writes it this way.

"Narratives of connection and relationship—particularly with other Christians—were powerful positive experiences in which North American Christians, some of whom had never been outside of the United States, 'discovered; that 'we are all the same' and 'we are one in Christ,' despite linguistic, cultural and economic differences."<sup>408</sup>

The relationship between the two countries on a short-term mission trip also realized how much stronger they grew toward Christ because of the experience. This fact is what draws many to go on more short-term mission trips through Cypress. Priest writes, "Mindful missionaries are conceived as ones who participate in STM for reasons that reach beyond themselves."<sup>409</sup> Many go not knowing anything about what will happen in the relationship between God and others, but

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<sup>405</sup>Wilson and Wilson, *Pipeline*, 5.

<sup>406</sup>Rom. 1:16 (NASB).

<sup>407</sup> Howell, *Short-term Mission*, 21.

<sup>408</sup>Ibid.,

<sup>409</sup>Priest, *Effective Engagement in Short-term Missions*, 154.

when they go "mindful," their lives can be changed forever. When one intentionally leaves a comfort zone, their focus can allow them to go beyond themselves.

One of the most significant changes made upon going and then returning is gospel sharing. Hoover writes, "The King entrusted his message of grace and salvation to us, his royal subjects."<sup>410</sup> Many participants kept saying over and over about how the short-term mission trip they attended allowed them "the intentionality of the gospel." In other words, they realized how important it is to share the gospel everywhere. As Romans 1:16<sup>411</sup> challenges the believer to be bold with the gospel, the Christian also needs to understand the devil is defeated. The short-term mission trip allowed the participant awareness to seek the lost and share Jesus with them. 1 John 3:8 says the Son of God appeared "to destroy the works of the devil."<sup>412</sup> John R. Stott writes, "The devil is still busy doing his wicked works, but he has been defeated, and in Christ we can escape from his tyranny."<sup>413</sup> A lot of this came with the training in understanding how to share their testimony. The participants could see how their own stories of salvation could help lead others to salvation in Christ. These two factors, put together with God-ordained relationships, builds confidence. Priest writes, "By definition, STM is the mobilization of the church in the power of the Holy Spirit to join in God's action in the world."<sup>414</sup> The point is to go where God is working, join Him, and go and share the gospel. The truth is that many who go on short-term mission trips for the first time may not be gospel sharers, but they returned with the confidence

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<sup>410</sup>Hoover, *Mapping Church Missions*, 22.

<sup>411</sup>Rom. 1:16 (NASB).

<sup>412</sup>1 John 3:8 (NASB).

<sup>413</sup>John R. Stott, *The Letters of John: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 19 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 128.

<sup>414</sup>Priest, *Effective Engagement in Short-term Missions*, 278.

they did not have before they left. Priest continues, "Its purpose is to announce God's kingdom through brief trips with specific purposes."<sup>415</sup> Through relationships forming on Cypress short-term mission trips, the participants shared the gospel—many for the first time—and returned, continuing these relationships and sharing the gospel with their direct neighbor.

One participant who does go on short-term mission trips with Cypress shared some excellent insight into their experience on a particular short-term mission trip. This person had helped do VBS in schools and shared the gospel with many on the trip. Several salvations took place with other team members sharing the salvation story. This participant wrote every name who received Christ that week in their Bible and prays for them daily. David P. Jacob writes, "Going on a short-term mission trip can also help you determine your specific role in the mission function of the Church."<sup>416</sup> Even more importantly, a short-term mission trip allows for a person's spiritual gift to be revealed to them and how they can serve through Cypress Baptist Church's ministries. David S. Dockery writes, "The goal of the practice of any spiritual gift is the edification of others."<sup>417</sup> Just as Paul encouraged the Corinthian church to use their gifts for others, the application is the same today. Even deeper, one participant said they know what God wants them to do with their life. They are going to continue serving and eventually be an international missionary full-time. The discovery of this came through their first short-term mission trip, and this is the change a short-term mission trip can bring.

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<sup>415</sup>Priest, *Effective Engagement in Short-term Missions*, 278.

<sup>416</sup>David P. Jacob, *It's Your Call: To a Missional or Missionary Life* (Littleton, CO: William Carey Publishing, 2018), 17.

<sup>417</sup>David S. Dockery, *Holman Bible Handbook*, (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 1992), 692-693.

Lastly, it is good to communicate to others the changes made. These are the conversations that will lead to encouraging others to go on short-term mission trips. Archer writes, "The purpose of talking about the trip is to share with others what God has shown you."<sup>418</sup> First, many come and see their call to full-time ministry vividly, and the trip is what spurred it. Others see how they can serve within Cypress when before they did not see it at all. Short-term mission trips have helped produced Sunday School teachers for all ages and servants within other ministry areas of the church. The use of gifts is profound in understanding the data results, but this data still needs to be communicated to achieve more results. Acts 4 reference the unity of the early church. William H. Baker writes, "The unity of the early church is beautifully described in relation to the leaders' concern as they report to their own people the momentous events that have transpired."<sup>419</sup> Jacob writes, "Everyone has a part to play in God's global mission."<sup>420</sup> As Greene writes, "Your only duty is to be faithful. God will provide and show you your role in the process. You can pray, give, or go. Or do two of the above. Or all three."<sup>421</sup>

### Insight from Interviews

The interviewed brought good counsel to the thesis project because they have been on many trips or are presently involved in short-term missions. Three of those interviewed are considered full-time in some aspects of missions and short-term missions. When they were all explicitly asked about the obstacles keeping from involvement in short-term missions, their

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<sup>418</sup>Archer, *Holding the Rope*, 106.

<sup>419</sup>William H. Baker, *Acts: An Evangelical Commentary*, vol. 3, ed. by Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker House Books, 1995), 890.

<sup>420</sup>Jacob, *It's Your Call*, 17.

<sup>421</sup>Greene, *a Guide to Short-term Missions*, 13.

answers either went right along with the questionnaires or added more to it. Two of those interviewed work for two different ministry organizations and deal with many churches in short-term missions. They both initially said the reason people are not going on a short-term mission trip is financing because some churches either limit fundraising or do not allow it. One interviewee said motivation is significant because the church itself does not need to go to the nations. The people do not see a need because the church's leadership does not see the need, and the church needs to seek those ready and send them. David M. Sills writes, "The spiritual qualities of Barnabas were obvious to the Jerusalem church. No wonder they sent him to Antioch. He was probably sent to determine the genuineness of the conversions taking place there and encourage them to remain true to the Lord."<sup>422</sup> People say they do not have anything to offer, so why to give up time when they are already busy doing their everyday lives. Hoover writes, "As we mature in our faith, we become more willing to trust the Lord with our time."<sup>423</sup>

Pastor John Fream and the staff member continued with their answers by saying the number one reason is fear. Both highlighted this reason, with Pastor John saying there is no motivation for many to be part of short-term missions. He even points back to the "comfort zone." Many are not part of short-term missions because their friends are not part of it. There is fear if Cypress members that if they choose to go, they will not have any friends who will go with them. People are just more comfortable to go with a person's clique. Joerg Rieger writes, "The status quo, even in faith communities, rarely encourages truly life-changing travel

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<sup>422</sup>David M. Sills, *CSB Study Bible: Opportunities and Challenges in Global Missions*, ed. by E. A. Blum and T. Wax (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), 1738.

<sup>423</sup>Hoover, *Mapping Church Missions*, 78.

experience."<sup>424</sup> Both interviewees commented about the North Bossier community specifically. They do not see what Hoover writes, "We never know the impact one day or one week will make. Sometimes and eternal, life-saving difference."<sup>425</sup> The staff highlighted that vacations inhibit others from going. These answers go back to the premise of why many at Cypress are not part of short-term missions. In Acts 10<sup>426</sup>, Peter is challenged through a vision to see all people need the gospel. Timothy George writes that Peter's vision goes beyond his comfort. "From this, Peter is warned not to shrink, afterwards, from the Gentiles as unclean. There is doubt that God wished to encourage Peter to come to Cornelius without fear. But he had separated one nation to himself from the rest."<sup>427</sup>

The people interviewed answered questions about the local church and missions from local to international. In summary of this question, the church needs to have a long-term goal, with God being the center of it all. Occhipinti writes, "Although short-term mission is, by its very definition, limited in duration, it is most effective in the context of a long-term relationship."<sup>428</sup> The relationships built through short-term missions need sharing with the whole church, so the church is involved and part of the bigger vision in missions. Ultimately, short-term missions have a catalytic effect on the local leadership of the church. Short-term missions propel the leadership to fulfill their calling in serving the local church. Short-term missions comes down to relationships in missions undergirding God's call on the church. Hoover writes, "God places

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<sup>424</sup>Joerg Rieger, *Faith on the Road: A Short Theology of Travel and Justice* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 70.

<sup>425</sup>*Ibid.*, 96.

<sup>426</sup>Acts 10 (NASB).

<sup>427</sup>George, *Reformation Commentary on Scripture*, 137.

<sup>428</sup>Occhipinti, *Making a Difference in a Globalized World*, 121.

unparalleled value on relationships."<sup>429</sup> Every believer should see the Bible and what God says about their involvement in missions. Arthur W. Pink writes, "Each servant is dealt with according to his individual needs and disciplined with a view to the particular work which God has for him to do."<sup>430</sup>

## Conclusion

Chapter four shows that Cypress members have specific reasons for not going on a short-term mission trip, and many of them have the same reasons. There is a lack of promotion from Cypress to engage the whole church globally, but it still does not answer all the questions of the "why" many are not going. The members of Cypress need to see the need to engage missionally on at least a small scale. Howell writes, "For the conceptual shift to occur, the community of evangelical missions needed a shift in their understanding of the missionary."<sup>431</sup> The shift in understanding comes down to the call of God, and that call is a journey of obedience. When studying the Bible, God's call on the characters throughout the Bible is unique, but there are some similarities. God calls all of them to join him on His mission. Henry Blackaby writes of Moses at the burning bush, "God called Moses at the burning bush, but he had been shaping Moses for eighty years."<sup>432</sup> God is calling and shaping all of Cypress for His purpose, and that purpose is to join Him and fulfill His vision. Henry Blackaby puts it in a very personal but practical way.

"Moses was gaining personal knowledge of every trail, well, and mountain in the desert of Midian and Sinai—experiences he would need later to lead the Israelites to freedom in

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<sup>429</sup>Hoover, *Mapping Church Missions*, 100.

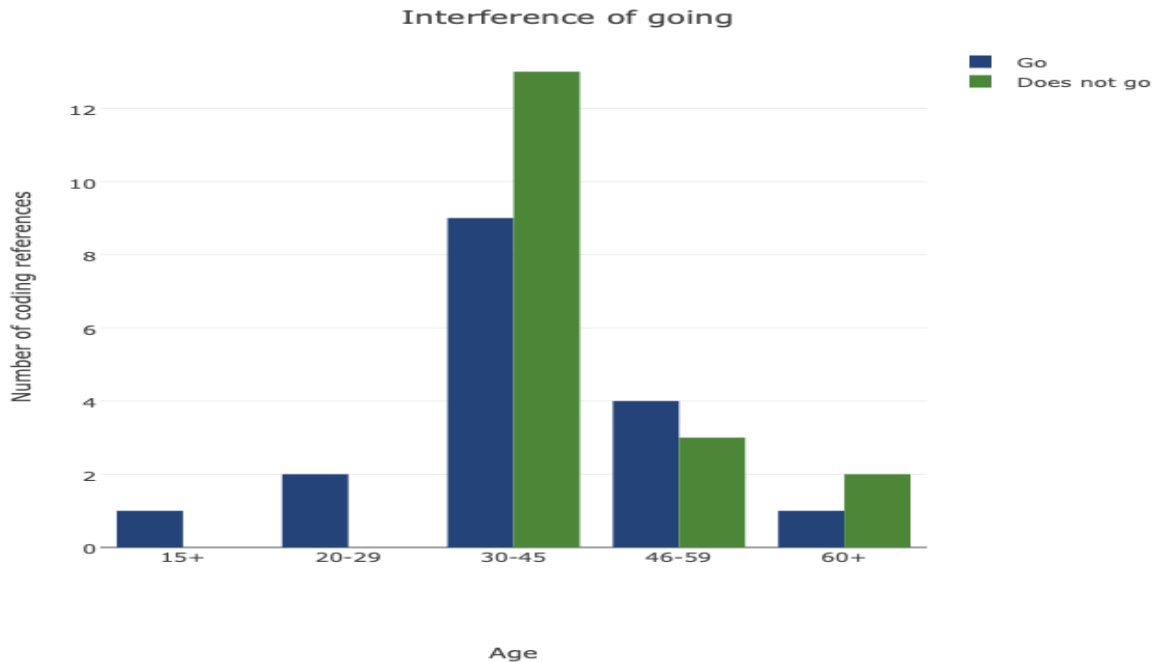
<sup>430</sup>Arthur W. Pink, *Gleanings in Exodus*, (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 1981), 26.

<sup>431</sup>Howell, *Short-term Mission*, 82.

<sup>432</sup>Avery T. Willis, Jr. and Henry T. Blackaby, *On Mission with God: Living God's Purpose for His Glory*, (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2002), 42.



the promised land. God always prepares you for your part in His mission by encountering you in various ways. When you join God on mission, He reveals His presence to you in your daily life, and your life is linked to His eternal certainty. God interacts with you daily, because He is personally concerned for you.”<sup>433</sup>



The above graph illustrates some conclusions for this project. Within all of these age groups, the project manager intentionally included participants of all age ranges. There is a diverse range of age in order to receive the best accurate results. As seen here, the age ranges from 30-45 have the most reason for "interference of going." Wilson and Wilson highlight this interference by writing, "...fear, misunderstanding God's purposes, focusing on the temporal instead of the eternal, pursuing what makes us happy instead of what makes us holy, etc."<sup>434</sup> The age group of 30-45 is the highest because this is the largest demographic of Cypress members. Priest writes, "But when you are a member of a cultural group, you have celebrations which give zest values which give a cognitive framework, action patters which give direction to your days,

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<sup>433</sup>Willis and Blackaby, *On Mission with God*, 42.

<sup>434</sup>Wilson and Wilson, *Pipeline*, 48.

and associational ties which root you in a human context."<sup>435</sup> This age has the most significant number of Sunday School classes and the most attending worship. This group also has the most kids and teenagers in all of the programs of Cypress. One of the best ways to begin influencing them is to be more conscious of the presentation of short-term mission trips from the pulpit and stage. If Cypress's culture is going to change in the context of short-term missions and global engagement, the ages from 30-45 will have to be the influencers. The influences need to be touched through the heart by the Holy Spirit through Biblical teaching on missions. William Barclay writes, "For most people, the way to the recesses of a person's inmost being lies not through the mind but through the heart."<sup>436</sup> The heart is where the change needs to begin to have a culture change at Cypress.

This graph shows those that go and those who do not see, hear, and discuss reasons the reasons many are using for not going. Even those that go hear about the reasons many are using not to go. Discipleship and education are an excellent way to see more engagement at Cypress on short-term missions. The pulpit and on stage are great ways to present the need to go. Also, through Bible study classes and word of mouth with testimonies, it can change a person's heart. Wilson and Wilson write, "Go into all the world, make disciples, baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This is the mission of the church."<sup>437</sup> The reason might be about one's comfort zone, family issues, or money, but in the end, the basis of the reasons is fear. As finances are the most prominent reasons, Cypress can show how this can dispel with proper help.

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<sup>435</sup>Priest, *effective Engagement in Short-term Missions*, 130.

<sup>436</sup>William Barclay, *The Letter to the Corinthians*, (Louisville, KY: London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 29.

<sup>437</sup>Wilson and Wilson, *Pipeline*, 60.

All the data points out that Cypress needs to step out in faith and bring others into the Kingdom work. Wilson and Wilson write, "Mission work is a communal effort, and that is often blurred and corrupted by our modern Western culture that places a high value on individuality."<sup>438</sup> Wilson and Wilson summarize well with this one statement how North Bossier's culture influences many not to go to the nations. Cypress needs to continue to become the culture setter for North Bossier as the church grows.

This chapter's conclusion shows many reasons why many Cypress members are not going to the nations. Many themes emerged because of the data gathered, which helped understand how the future can hopefully change the ministry of short-term missions for the better. Cypress people need missional engagement to draw others globally to see the gospel's need to go to the nations. Acts 1:8 is the plan and the model. Edward Bicknell writes, "These words correct any selfish or narrow view. They suggest a long period of expansion. They describe exactly the plan of Acts, which records the spread of the Gospel from Jerusalem to Rome."<sup>439</sup> Missional engagement can begin by serving locally—Cypress' Foster Ministry—to other partnerships in the community. Many can begin by signing up for a family mission trip to Brooklyn. The comfortability of serving with family can make a big difference. Each Cypress member can take small steps to begin missional engagement, leading to an international short-term mission trip. In doing this, life change can happen among Cypress members for a future of growing and maturing in Christ. Howell writes, "Guided by theological commitments and embedded in a wider social context, STM is a type of travel unto itself in which particular guiding narratives shape the

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<sup>438</sup>Wilson and Wilson, *Pipeline*, 60.

<sup>439</sup>Edward Bicknell, *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Including the Apocrypha*, ed. by Charles Gore, Henry Goudge, and Alfred Guillaume (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1942), 328.

experiences of participants."<sup>440</sup> These shaping experiences is what Cypress as a whole need to see as the ministry of short-term missions at Cypress grows.

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<sup>440</sup>Howell, *Short-term Mission*, 24.

## Chapter 5

### Conclusion

As this project concludes, it is not enough to get results from the study for the thesis, but the project also needs to have a direction to incorporate the results to see the ministry move forward. The purpose and focus of this thesis project are to study why many members of Cypress are not committing to a week to eleven days to attend a short-term mission trip to share the gospel and further the establishment of the church. F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingston write, "Missionary enterprise, i.e., the propagation of the Christian faith, was one of the main tasks of the Christian Church from its beginning."<sup>441</sup> The project conducted many facets of data gathering to achieve the answers it needed for the results. The purpose is more than just trying to gain answers to their reasons, but it is about listening to them and then seeking ways the Missions Pastor and Senior Pastor can begin to offer paths to alleviate these reasons to see more involved in short-term missions and more lives transformed. There are tools suggested from the data collected, and the study needs two to five years of monitoring and tracking to retrieve actual accurate results. The hope and goal are to see more going to the nations to share Christ and build on the church. In Acts 1:8<sup>442</sup>, he says to His disciples that they will be witnesses from home to all over the world. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan writes, "Witnesses' here is used in the dual sense of 'eyewitnesses' and 'witness-bearers.'"<sup>443</sup> The ministry of short-term missions at Cypress desires to

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<sup>441</sup>F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone, *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 1100.

<sup>442</sup>Acts 1:8 (NASB).

<sup>443</sup>Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, *Acts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2005), 41.

see Cypress members witness for Christ in everything He has done for them to those lost who do not know Him and be His image-bearer.

### **Moving Forward**

In listening to Cypress members, the thesis proved there are specific reasons why more members are not participating in short-term missions. In general, the answers related to finances, family, leaving one's "comfort zone," insecurity of being ready, and ultimately fear. Although the answers people gave and a few more expressed a desire to go on a trip eventually, or at the least, they expressed support on a verbal level of short-term missions. Going forward from here, the project manager will look at the ways suggested by the participants and begin incorporating the different ideas given to see if it can add to bring positive results. Many are choosing to go based on sound reasons. They choose to go because of relationships, the gospel, a sense of calling, the desire to use their gifts, and being intentional, praying for lasting change through short-term missions. Short-term missions bring believers together in fellowship in different ways. Carl R. Holladay writes, "This amplified understanding of koinonia, which is often rendered 'fellowship,' becomes evident. Solidarity of belief leads to community of goods."<sup>444</sup> The team going has a fellowship and accountability that many Christians may never receive if they never choose to go. The trip also has a fellowship with the people visited and served. Paul refers to encouraging each other when he talks about visiting Rome in Romans 1. Both will be encouraged by each other's gifts. Hendriksen and Kristemaker write, "He is referring to spiritual strengthening in general."<sup>445</sup> One of the first steps in educating Cypress's people is understanding the value of a team

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<sup>444</sup>Carl R. Holladay, *Acts: A Commentary*, ed. by C. Clifton Black, M. Eugene Boring, and John T. Carroll (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 2016), 89.

<sup>445</sup>W. Hendriksen and S. J. Kristemaker, *Exposition of Paul's Epistle to the Romans*. vol. 12-13 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1953), 51-52.

going to the nations working together to use their gifts as a team. This point can take away the fear of inadequacy, as some expressed in the result, because the team members can trust and lean on each other. It is as C. Zoccali writes about spiritual gifts, "Ministries or abilities that the Holy Spirit gives to Christians for the edification of the Church."<sup>446</sup> The goal of short-term missions at Cypress is to build on the church worldwide, and the Holy Spirit gives every believer a gift to use to encourage the church.

The research needs now to continue toward how to make short-term mission trips effective. Some studies have addressed the effectiveness of short-term mission trips and even if they are worth it, through this study and others researched, short-term mission trips—done correctly—prove to be a strong arm of ministry through the local church. Priest writes, "Churches and agencies should invest time and energy helping volunteers think through their suitability, best placement, contribution to ministry and valid reasons for going."<sup>447</sup> It goes back to Ephesians 4, where Paul says the church is for "for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ." While moving forward, the Missions Pastor's responsibility is to equip more believers at Cypress in the ministry of short-term missions through discipleship. The equipping will come through a whole staff effort educating and training Cypress members in understanding their gifts and how to use them on the mission field. The education in this area will hopefully remove the fears that are real and present in these people. Rudolph Schnackenburg writes, "In this case the people given to the Church of Christ were intended to prepare the saints for a work of service to carry out the building-up of the Body of Christ."<sup>448</sup> If the church can raise more Sunday School teachers for all age groups, then the

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<sup>446</sup>C. Zoccali, *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016), 443.

<sup>447</sup>Priest, *Effective Engagement in Short-term Missions*, 38.

church can see more going to the nations investing in long-term relationships built on the local church in those nations visited. The project now needs to continue improving its discipling and training efforts for all team members as the church and ministry grows and continues. The very point is to seek why many choose not to participate and, hopefully, see them change those reasons to participate.

Throughout this project, in seeking answers to why more do not participate in short-term missions from Cypress, it has been apparent that the project would lead to more findings than to just the question of why many are choosing not to go. The previous paragraph referred to equipping the members to use their gifts through discipleship and training, but there still needs to be more people signing up for Cypress's trips to train them effectively. So, in moving forward, there needs to be a better system put before the whole church of Cypress that will generate an awareness of missions globally for more participation. Bob Utley writes, "There is no biblical evidence for separating believers into hierarchal groups. All believers have gifts for ministry to the body of Christ."<sup>449</sup> Utley's statement comes from Acts 13<sup>450</sup>, where Paul and Barnabas were doing ministry, but they are not set apart for a separate ministry, but ministry they are called and gifted to as all believers. The gifting in all believers should lead all Christians into ministry, just like Barnabas and Paul. There are many gifts and many ministries, but one God leading all through these gifts given by Him. 1 Corinthians 12: 6 says, "the same God who works all things

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<sup>448</sup>Rudolph Schnackenburg, *Epistle to the Ephesians: A Commentary* (Edinburgh, Scotland: T & T Clark LTD., 1991), 177.

<sup>449</sup>Bob Utley, *Luke the Historian: The Book of Acts*. vol. 3B. Study Guide Commentary Series (Marshall, TX: Bible Lessons International, 2003), 161.

<sup>450</sup>Acts 13 (NASB).



in all persons."<sup>451</sup> Utley writes, "Every believer has a freely-given grace given by the Spirit for ministry. Every believer is important. Every believer is gifted. Every believer is a minister."<sup>452</sup> Acts 13<sup>453</sup> and 1 Corinthians 12<sup>454</sup> correlated together, tells the church all are gifted by the one God through the Holy Spirit for the work of ministry. Fear is a big reason many are not going. It is a fear of not being equipped and a fear of the unknown, just as Moses' communicated his fears to God at the burning bush. Philip G. Ryken writes, "The commissioning of the prophet Moses is a reminder that every believer has a job to do."<sup>455</sup> As training continues, Cypress can become confident in their spiritual gifts to share them with the world. Utley writes, "The purpose of God's gift is not the elevation of the individual, but for the health of the whole body. We need each other!"<sup>456</sup>

### **Compared to Other Studies**

There is value to short-term mission trips when done correctly in all aspects. The Literature of Review looked at both sides of this, but in the end, the project manager sees a more considerable benefit to short-term mission trips than not doing them at all. Again, the vision is to share the gospel and build on the church. The Missions Pastor's conviction that the accomplishment of this happens with a substantial investment in relationships in the communities visited over a long period. Ver Beek did a study on this through trips to Honduras.

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<sup>451</sup>1 Cor. 12:6 (NASB).

<sup>452</sup>Bob Utley, *Paul's Letters to a Troubled Church: I and II Corinthians*. vol. 6. Study Guide Commentary Series (Marshall, TX: Bible Lessons International, 2002), 142.

<sup>453</sup>Acts 13 (NASB).

<sup>454</sup>1 Cor. 12 (NASB).

<sup>455</sup>Philip G. Ryken, *Exodus: Saved for God's Grace*, ed. by R. Kent Hughes (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2005), 90.

<sup>456</sup>*Ibid.*, 142.

His particular study showed a negative effect on the participants, and one of the main reasons was relationships. Ver Beek writes, "Interviews revealed Honduran communities felt most North American work groups had missed opportunities to build stronger relationships."<sup>457</sup> Relationships are a missed fact, and not seeing this produces poor trips and less participation. Ver Beek continues, "Agency representatives and community members alike said an attitude of openness, not language, was the most important factor in communication."<sup>458</sup> First, if relationships are weak, then those who went see no reason to go back, and second, they will not encourage others with their story about the trip, which is one of the best ways to see new people participate in the ministry of short-term missions. While in Mexico, the team of 21 participants built a strong bond of serving together, which translated to the Mexicans served in Merida. There were over 30 decisions for Christ due in no small part to the unity of the team through the Holy Spirit's work. Another team of 22 people is going in January, and 13 are from the previous team. The biggest reason is to go back and invest in the people they began relationships with two months ago. The bar graph in chapter four showed the main reason Cypress members are going is because of relationships. There is rapport among those who go, and their story builds a bridge for others to hopefully agree to participate and engage. The disciples feared Paul because of his reputation, but Barnabas stepped in and built the bridge. Timothy George writes, "Barnabas is to be examined, who because of his generosity relieved the needy of the whole church and therefore was 'the son of encouragement,' so now by his testimony he maintains Paul's good name while he is in danger and is not ashamed of him whom he knew everybody suspected."<sup>459</sup> Just as Barnabas

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<sup>457</sup>Ver Beek, "The Impact of Short-term Missions," 481.

<sup>458</sup>Ibid., 381.

<sup>459</sup>Timothy George, *Reformation Commentary on Scripture: Acts*. vol. 6. ed. by Esther Chung-Kim and Todd R. Hains (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 127.

helped build the relationship between Paul and the disciples, encouraging stories bring others into the relationship of short-term missions.

The lack of communication of short-term missions has become an issue on why many Cypress members are not participating. Reflecting on these studies is to see what will help move forward over the years to continue this project. Priest writes, "Therefore, we must emphasize that STM is helping the church to realize the important role of lay people in God's mission."<sup>460</sup> Many participants of short-term missions who participated in this project stated that the issue of communication is that many are not participating in short-term missions. Pastor John Fream said, "It is up to the Missions Pastor to communicate the need and information about the trips, and then it is on him to communicate to the members of Cypress to engage more in short-term missions."<sup>461</sup> Again, coming back to Ephesians 4, where the church needs to be "equipped for the work of service." Maxie D. Dunnam writes, "A variety of gifts is given, needed gifts befitting every believer, enabling every believer to make his or her own unique contribution to the whole."<sup>462</sup> The three-way relationship between the church, the ministry served, and the host country can bring life change to all three relationships involved as each one uses its gifts to edify the church. Discipleship in short-term missions can see more participation and quality teams. Matt Setliffe said in his interview, "An ongoing year-round Bible study on missions with an emphasis in training is a great way to educate church members in missions to see more involved."<sup>463</sup> If the church's DNA is to be missions with an emphasis on short-term missions,

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<sup>460</sup>Priest, *Effective Engagement in Short-term Missions*, 280.

<sup>461</sup>Interview with Pastor John Fream, Cypress Baptist Church.

<sup>462</sup>Maxie D. Dunnam, *Galatians/Ephesians/Philippians/Colossians/Philemon*, ed. by Lloyd J. Ogilvie, vol. 31 (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1982), 199.

<sup>463</sup>Interview with Matt Setliffe, 410Bridge employee.

then the teachings on this need to permeate every area of the church. In Act 15:36, Paul tells Barnabas that he wants to go back and visit the people he had led to the Lord for more encouragement. When reading why people are not participating, the lack of understanding of gifts on how to use them to build the church is missing. David Brown, A. R, Faucet, and Bobby Jamieson write, "We notice here, for the first time, a trace of that tender solicitude for his converts, that earnest longing to see their faces, which appears in the letters which he wrote afterwards, as one of the most remarkable and attractive features of his character."<sup>464</sup> Paul modeled missions with his life journeys, and he did short-term missions with many of his visits to his churches based on the definition of a short-term mission trip. There is a value in a short-term mission trip, and the reasons given from this project in this thesis project is to hear why they are not participating. When studying Paul's life and knowing his purpose as a model can educate more Cypress members in their role in the ministry of short-term missions. The church builds on the church. Offutt writes, "Most leaders want to incorporate STM's into their existing ministries or use them as catalysts for programs that make sense for their congregations and organizations."<sup>465</sup> The vision is there, but the vision is not known.

The subject of fear came out in chapter four. Scripturally, God desires to remove fear because fear brings a lack of trust and disobedience in the faith walk with Christ. Cypress has the vision to plan to reach its community for Christ, plant churches, and to go to the nations. Hunsberger writes, "The intention of a strategic missional partnership needs to be a long-term commitment to global mission."<sup>466</sup> The long-term partnership allows for Cypress to invest, and

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<sup>464</sup>Brown, Faucet, and Jamieson, *Commentary Critical and Explanatory*, 195.

<sup>465</sup>Offutt, "The Role of Short-term Mission Teams," 802.

<sup>466</sup>Hunsberger, "Launching a Strategic Missional Partnership," 36.

the investment is for the whole church. While in Mexico, this point proved to be true because, without the partnership with the missionaries Hector and Roberto, the Cypress team would not accomplish half of what they accomplished. The relationship with Hector and Roberto in Merida with the churches allowed Cypress to come in and serve wholeheartedly. Hunsberger writes, "They [missionaries] provide an opportunity for people to see the realities of the world, they help provide ministry opportunities could not otherwise be accomplished, and they supply disciple-making opportunities for the partner."<sup>467</sup> In the book of 2 Timothy 1:3<sup>468</sup>, Paul instructs Timothy to carry the message Paul has been preaching. Raymond F. Collins writes, "Timothy is not alone in passing along what he has heard from Paul; there are many witnesses to what Paul has said."<sup>469</sup> Hunsberger writes, "The church must be strengthened by the truth, retain the truth, and the church must entrust the truth to others."<sup>470</sup> As said, the reasons given come to a firm conclusion under the reason fear. To see more reasons for not participating, the conquering of fear must happen to allow more to be confident with the gospel's truth.

The bottom line in moving forward is seeing more Cypress members participating in the way they can as the ministry of short-term missions grows. Short-term missions need to become a holistic approach to the ministry. As mentioned before, some of the questionnaires said they have not participated because of calling, that they did not feel called to go. One of those interviewed mentioned that many talk about calling, but they misunderstand what calling is. Emily Katherine McDonald mentions calling in her study of her thesis. Her thesis mentioned

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<sup>467</sup>Hunsberger, "Launching a Strategic Missional Partnership," 40.

<sup>468</sup>2 Tim. 1:3 (NASB).

<sup>469</sup>Collins, *1 & II Timothy and Titus*, 120.

<sup>470</sup>Ibid., 24.

interviewing participants on why they chose to go. McDonald writes, "Six participants described their mission work as either 'calling' from God or they felt 'led' to go."<sup>471</sup> The word "calling" here is an interesting word used in the Bible when referring to believers. 1 Corinthians 1:9<sup>472</sup> refers to it as salvation, which is how scripture defines it. Thomas R. Schreiner writes, "This makes sense since the word 'calling' in Paul refers to an effective call, a call that creates faith."<sup>473</sup> God's call of salvation creates the believer's faith that leads the Christian to go where God's path leads. As reference before in Acts 13:2<sup>474</sup>, Paul and Barnabas are set apart for the work God has called them to in ministry. Philippians 1:6 says, "confident...that He who began a good work in you will carry out on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."<sup>475</sup> Schreiner writes, "Since God effectively summons people to believe, he will sustain that belief until the end."<sup>476</sup> Moises Silva writes, "In verse 6, Paul gives us a further, but closely related reason for his joyful sense of gratitude—his assurance that God's work cannot be thwarted."<sup>477</sup> The calling is to salvation, and then the believer is to walk in grace by joining God where he is working. Bob Utley writes, "It is God who calls and equips for ministry tasks."<sup>478</sup> There is no specific call to short-term missions

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<sup>471</sup>McDonald, "Perceptions of 'Less Fortunate,'" 34.

<sup>472</sup>1 Cor. 1:9 (NASB)

<sup>473</sup>Schreiner, *1 Corinthians*, 57.

<sup>474</sup>Acts 13:2 (NASB).

<sup>475</sup>Phil. 1:6 (NASB).

<sup>476</sup>Ibid.

<sup>477</sup>Moises Silva, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Philippians*. ed. by Robert W. Yarbrough and Joshua W. Jipp (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 58.

<sup>478</sup>Utley, *Paul's Letters to a Troubled Church*, 161.

within the Bible, but in Matthew 28:19-20<sup>479</sup>, Acts 1:8<sup>480</sup>, and the whole book of Acts, there is a call by God to go to the nations with the gospel. Short-term missions are an avenue for this to happen, and since Cypress offers this, the members of Cypress should respond to the Bible and go to the nations through short-term missions to share Jesus as part of the vision of Cypress.

As the results gave several reasons for those choosing not to go, all the reasons came under fear. There is a fear of inadequacy in witnessing and effectiveness in another culture. A lot of this has to do with the sharing of one's testimony. Donna Sheets writes, "Teaching people how to share their faith challenges them to also consider techniques to use in another cultural context—thus another justification for cross-cultural training."<sup>481</sup> Training in sharing one's testimony with the gospel intertwined in the person's story for a cross-cultural context is needed. Learning to share one's story in a cross-cultural context can give a person confidence to begin sharing it in a more comfortable context like their home community. In the book of 1 Peter 3:15<sup>482</sup>, Peter encourages believers always to be ready to "account" for Christ and what He has done in the believer's life. W. A. Gruden writes, "The alternative to fear is to focus attention on someone else."<sup>483</sup> In showing "reverence" to Christ, the person telling their story is pointing to Christ and not themselves. Jesus is the subject of the conversation and not the person sharing. Gruden writes, "*To reverence Christ as Lord* means really to believe that Christ, not one's human

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<sup>479</sup>Matt. 28:19-20 (NASB).

<sup>480</sup>Acts 1:8 (NASB).

<sup>481</sup>Donna Sheets, "A Short-term Mission Trip Training Program with an Emphasis on Cross-Cultural Training and Reentry for Covenant Church in Winterville, North Carolina" (Regent University, ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2010), 54.

<sup>482</sup>1 Pet. 3:15 (NASB).

<sup>483</sup>W. A. Gruden, *1 Peter: An Introduction and Commentary*. vol. 17 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 160.

opponents, is truly in control of events."<sup>484</sup> Sheets writes, "Mission trips may heighten the awareness of the importance of knowing how to share one's faith."<sup>485</sup> The goal is to see this continue after the trip is over. As the project continues in observation, it can track participants on how often they share their testimony. If participants can have confidence that Christ can use them on the mission field, then they can have confidence that Christ can use them at home too. Gruden writes, "To have such reverence *in your hearts* is to maintain continually a deep-seated inward confidence in Christ as reigning Lord and King."<sup>486</sup> It comes down to having an evangelistic heart and doing the ministry of evangelism. 2 Timothy 4:5, Paul tells Timothy to "do the work of an evangelist."<sup>487</sup> Doing the work of an evangelist is not about having the gift of evangelism. However, it is the believer's call, just as Timothy's calling to go and share Jesus. Bob Utley writes, "Believers must not only affirm the mandate of Jesus but live it out day by day!"<sup>488</sup> Sheet writes, "Experiencing a short-term mission trip is a way for missionaries to be aware of evangelism."<sup>489</sup>

As this project moves forward beyond the writing stage, the thesis has laid out from willful participants reasons many are not participating in Cypress's short-term missions. The moving forward part is about encouraging the members of Cypress to engage in faith in short-

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<sup>484</sup>Gruden, *1 Peter*, 160.

<sup>485</sup>Sheets, "A Short-term Mission Trip Training Program," 51.

<sup>486</sup>Gruden, *1 Peter*, 160.

<sup>487</sup>2 Tim. 4:6 (NASB).

<sup>488</sup>Bob Utley, *Paul's Fourth Missionary Journey: 1 Timothy, Titus, 11 Timothy*, vol. 9 (Marshall, TX: Bible Lessons International, 2000), 172.

<sup>489</sup>Sheets, "A Short-term Mission Trip Training Program," 50.



term missions. Matthew Alan Trill writes, "Without condemnation or undue pressure, leaders should seek to challenge individuals about their involvement while allowing for the Lord's personal work in their lives."<sup>490</sup> The church needs this because of the reasons given based on this thesis project. Trill continues, "Churches are full of busy members and families. Many feel that they have so many responsibilities that adding a STM project is not an option."<sup>491</sup> These statements sound just like Cypress from the data-gathering stage of this project. In Luke chapter nine, Jesus sends his disciples out without Him. If this is not understood correctly, the misunderstanding is Jesus is sending them out with any help. G. Childress writes, "The Lord wanted his disciples to learn to trust in God for everything, just as he had taught them."<sup>492</sup> Do not forget that Jesus spent three years with them in preparation. Trill illustrates the point of preparation and training to give confidence in seeing more involved in short-term missions. Jesus asked them in Luke 22:35<sup>493</sup> if they "lacked anything," they said, "no." Martha VanCise writes, "Alleviates many fears and apprehensions."<sup>494</sup> VanCise says the understanding of "lacking nothing" alleviates the fears. Learning from Trill is learning to do preparation well as the future of this project continues to enhance the ministry of short-term missions at Cypress.

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<sup>490</sup>Trill, "Short-term Missions," 67.

<sup>491</sup>Ibid., 67.

<sup>492</sup>Gavin Childress, *Opening up Luke's Gospel* (Reylands Road, Leominster: Day One Publications, 2006), 79.

<sup>493</sup>Lk. 22:35 (NASB).

<sup>494</sup>Martha VanCise, *Successful Mission Teams: A Guide for Volunteers* (Birmingham, AL: New Hope Publishers, 2004), 22.

## Implementing the Project

The project successfully gathered useful data that communicates the reasons many are not participating in short-term missions. Through the interview process and questionnaires in the data-gathering stage, the plan helps the ministry's future at Cypress. As said before, this project will see more results in years to come because of the nature of short-term missions. However, there are ways to begin helping Cypress members see the value of a short-term mission trip and alleviate their reasons for not participating. Paul is the supreme example of a missionary in the Bible, and just as he had goals, Cypress should too. Eckhard J. Schnabel writes this about Paul.

"The goals of Paul's missionary work focus on preaching the gospel to Jews and Gentiles who live in cities between Jerusalem and Illyricum and Spain, entreating them to be reconciled to God through faith in Jesus the messianic Savior and Lord, teaching the new converts the whole counsel of God as he established local communities of followers of Jesus."<sup>495</sup>

Paul is God's instrument. 1 Corinthians illustrates the comparison of Paul and Apollos to God. God is the one who does all the growth using Paul and Apollos, a Jew of Alexandrian birth, as He wills in the growth. Leon Morris writes, "The real work is done by God; Paul and Apollos are no more than instruments *through whom* he does his work. These ministers could work only 'as the Lord gave' to them."<sup>496</sup> Just as God used these two, He deeply desires to use all Cypress members for the nations. Schnabel writes, "People live in cities, towns, and villages. In order for people to hear the gospel, Paul had to travel to the cities, towns, and villages where people

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<sup>495</sup>Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Paul the Missionary: Realities, Strategies, and Methods* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 210.

<sup>496</sup>Leon Morris, *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*. vol. 7 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 145.

live."<sup>497</sup> Short-term missions are the practical way to help Cypress members see the nations and then engage them.

Practically speaking, the project participants who are active in short-term missions at Cypress and all of those interviewed posed some excellent points on presenting the church's trips in a better way. The point that kept coming up that many are not participating in short-term mission trips with Cypress is a lack of understanding of what each trip entails. Cypress needs a more informative way to communicate partnerships yearly. A simple information meeting is not enough to draw the people to know what a trip offers. Pastor John Fream in his interview, said that the church needs to see the trips more visibly. He says it is up to him to make it happen in presenting the ideas to the church. Pastor Fream does an excellent job preaching biblically about sharing the gospel from home to the nations, but there is a lack of communication on giving the details of each trip from the pulpit. Feasibly, each international partnership is unique in its way. Cypress, as a whole, does not know the intricacies of each trip. The time is now to communicate these partnerships to Cypress with at least the message of what they offer. The best way to do this is going to be through video and social media. Communication of trips has primarily been through paper announcements and a little word of mouth. The project manager will begin forming a social media platform to reach Cypress and beyond with the message of short-term missions. Cypress needs to see the church as a sending unit to the world. Schnabel talks about the church in Jerusalem, sending missionaries all over for the spread of the gospel.

"Luke credits precisely the church in Jerusalem with the impetus for spreading the gospel to other 'cultures': Philip goes from Jerusalem to Samaria, and Peter moves from Jerusalem to Caesarea: Peter is instrumental in leading the first Gentile to faith in Jesus Christ; Peter puts forward important arguments during the Apostles' Creed in which some of the criteria for the Gentile mission are discussed."<sup>498</sup>

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<sup>497</sup>Schnabel, *Paul the Missionary*, 258.

<sup>498</sup>*Ibid.*, 376.

Paul sought to serve Christ as he built the church of Jesus Christ everywhere he went. Matthew Henry writes, "He never served himself, nor made himself a servant of men, of their lusts and humors, nor was he a time-server; but he made it his business to serve the Lord."<sup>499</sup> In Act 20<sup>500</sup>, Paul is at the end of his ministry; he refers to "not shrinking" from anything Christ called him to. Short-term mission's ministry can grow to see all serving the Lord by reaching the nations.

The beginning of this will start around an interactive Missions Center in the foyer of the church. The missions center will detail all of the mission's partners, both local, domestic, and international, displayed at the Missions Center. The mission's center centers around a digital screen displayed on a wall, which will have video playing and pictures rolling through past trips. It will also display testimonies of participants talking about all of the different trips. The videos will highlight the trip itself and the impact it has on those that go. The use of video is just a first step to bring the ministry of short-term missions to Cypress. The Missions Center will be in the church's main foyer, the middle of the two worship centers, and access traffic to and from the education building. William Barclay writes, "To be truly religious is to love God and to love those whom God made in His own image; and to love God and other people, not with a vague sentimentality, but with that total commitment which issues in devotion to God and practical service of others."<sup>501</sup> Cypress accomplishes loving God and others through worship and Sunday School. The main thing is to draw all of North Bossier to worship together, centering on Christ.

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<sup>499</sup>Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishing, 1994), 2156.

<sup>500</sup>Acts 20 (NASB).

<sup>501</sup>William Barclay, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 325.

Missions is not prevalent in worship but needs to become a more prevalent part of worship.

Craig Farmer, in writing about John 4 and the "Woman at the Well," he writes, "To worship the Father in spirit is to worship in the Holy Spirit and in truth, that is, the Son."<sup>502</sup> Worship is from the truth is the worship accepted by the Father. John 14:6 Jesus says that he is "the way."<sup>503</sup>

Missions lead people to the way, and worship is for the believer to exalt God and draw the lost to God. Cypress Baptist Church's missions need to be incorporated into worship to engage the people on a global scale.

The most reasonable way of doing all of this is to bring a videographer on a trip for people to see that Cypress's partnerships are safe and has the potential to be life changing. Over the next two years, the Missions Pastor will bring a videographer on various trips to build material to use on social media, the missions center, and worship. One questionnaire said there is a gap at Cypress when it comes to missions. Some participate, and those that do not, and it is a divided group. This form of engagement can then allow the whole church to see at the least the value of a short-term mission trip and then hopefully see a rise in participation on an even larger scale. Just as Schnabel writes of Paul, "Paul did not volunteer for missionary service. He was not commissioned by the apostles in Jerusalem, but he was sent by Jesus Christ and by God the Father."<sup>504</sup> In Acts 13:2, the Holy Spirit says to "set apart Paul and Barnabas."<sup>505</sup> Putting the whole ministry of missions before Cypress members can help draw more into this ministry. R. Alan Cole writes, "Like Jeremiah, Paul is one 'set apart' and called from his mother's womb, by

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<sup>502</sup>Craig S. Farmer, *Reformation Commentary on Scripture: John 1-12*, vol. 4. ed. by Timothy George and Scott M. Manetsch (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 137.

<sup>503</sup>John 14:6 (NASB).

<sup>504</sup>Schnabel, *Paul the Missionary*, 124.

<sup>505</sup>Acts 13:2 (NASB).

the prevenient grace of God.<sup>506</sup> Just as Paul was "set apart," God desires through His grace to call more to go to the nations from the local level to the international level.

One more item from this study learned is that the utilization of the personal testimony to tell people about short-term missions is not happening. The personal testimony is a participant's story from a trip and highlights what God did in the participant's life while on the trip. The social media platform and the videos used in the various areas have not quite started, but the testimony is beginning to work. There are two trips on the horizon now in the next few months to Mexico and to Kenya. One of the Missions Pastor's challenges for participants is to tell their testimony from experiences to those who have never been on a trip. Both teams are at almost capacity, and it is because those who have been before are telling their stories. The challenge was placed on participants by the project manager a few months ago and results are showing an increase in participation already. The personal testimony is igniting people and might become the best tool of all. It is a tool that propels the participants to keep participating and to recruit more into the ministry of short-term missions. Eric Carpenter writes, "She believes God's mission is for the church to equip his family to be light in a dark world."<sup>507</sup> The testimony allows the church to equip more for this purpose.

### Conclusion

In concluding this project, the goal was to determine why many Cypress members are not participating in short-term missions. Seeing and listening to all of the participants' answers helps this thesis project see that they are not just rejecting short-term missions. However, they believe

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<sup>506</sup>R. Alan Cole, *Galatians: An Introduction and Commentary*. vol. 9. ed. by Leon Morris (Downers Grove: IL, 1989), 90.

<sup>507</sup>Carpenter, "The Effective Participation in a Short-term Mission Trip," 85.

they have legitimate reasons for not participating. Finances were the overwhelming number one reason many choose not to go, with fear being the second answer. Homelife, time, work, and vacation all have to do with time itself and they choose to use their time. Some admitted they have no call to go, or it is out of their comfort zone. Ultimately, all these falls under the factor of fear of the unknown. 1 John 4:18 says, "perfect love cast out fear."<sup>508</sup> John Stott writes, "The love that spells confidence banishes fear."<sup>509</sup> It is now time for the project to continue by helping all members see their purpose in life by following God's will by living in God's grace and bringing others into God's grace. Allen Verhey and Joseph S. Harvard write, "It is a reality in Christ, and that reality enables and demands a response; it renders us responseable and responsible."<sup>510</sup> As this project continues past the classes, may more people come to know God's grace through short-term missions at Cypress.

The reasons to participate in short-term missions needs telling to those who are not participating. Relationship, gospel, calling, life change, biblical mandate, and obedience are the main reasons for participating in short-term missions at Cypress. In looking at these reasons, there is a purpose that relationships are the highest on the graph. All the reasons gave lead to a stronger relationship with Christ and with others. Paul McGuinness writes, "He has prepared the way for us, and now He invites us to walk with Him down the path of partnership."<sup>511</sup> As the ministry of short-term missions continues at Cypress Baptist Church, the project manager will

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<sup>508</sup>1 John 4:18 (NASB).

<sup>509</sup>Stott, *The Letters to John*, 169.

<sup>510</sup>Allen Verhey and Joseph S. Harvard, *Ephesians: A Theological Commentary on the Bible*. ed. by Amy Plantinga Pauw and William G. Placher (Louisville, KT: John Knox Press, 2011), 76.

<sup>511</sup>McGuinness, *Walk this Way*, 111.

continue to educate Cypress members in short-term missions and grow the participants to go to the nations.



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May 15, 2020

John Fream  
Pastor  
Cypress Baptist Church  
4701 Palmetto Road  
Benton, Louisiana 71006

Dear John:

As a graduate student in the DMIN department/School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting project part of the requirements for a Doctor of Ministry degree. The title of my research project is "A Look at Short-Term Mission Trips in the Context of Cypress Baptist Church as a Sending Unit." The purpose of my research is to educate and train members Cypress Baptist Church, in the gospel and missional living with the primary purpose of seeing members of Cypress Baptist Church commit to going on short-term mission trips.

I am writing to request your permission to conduct my project at Cypress Baptist Church and to contact members of your staff and church to invite them to participate in my research study.

Participants will be asked to participate in a questionnaire and participate in a focus group. Some staff members will also be asked to participate in an interview for the project. Participants will be presented with informed consent information prior to participating. Taking part in this study is completely voluntary, and participants are welcome to discontinue participation at any time.

Thank you for considering my request. If you choose to grant permission, respond by email to [jbodine@cypressbaptist.org](mailto:jbodine@cypressbaptist.org).

Sincerely,

John Bodine  
Missions Pastor

## **Current Team Consent**

**Title of the Project:** A Look at Short-Term Missions in the Context of Cypress Baptist Church as a Sending Unit

**Principal Investigator:** John Bodine, Liberty University

### **Invitation to be Part of the Project**

You are invited to participate in a project study. In order to participate, you must be 18 and a member of Cypress Baptist Church. Taking part in this project is voluntary. You are being asked because you currently serving on a short-term mission team.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding to take part in this project.

### **What is the study about, and why is it being done?**

The purpose of this project is to seek answers as to why many of Cypress members are not part of the ministry of short-term mission at Cypress Baptist Church. The goal is to read and listen to the participants to hear real life answers and then begin the process of alleviating the reasons to see more involved in short-term missions at Cypress. This communication will help Cypress see why people are going and what changes they are making after returning.

### **What will happen if you take part in this study**

If you agree to be part of this project, I will ask you to do the following steps.

1. Once you provide consent, I will send you a questionnaire by e-mail to be sent back to me with your answers within two weeks.
2. After all questionnaires have been turned in, we will meet in a focus group to discuss with others your answers and to spur more discussions on the subject of short-term missions at Cypress Baptist Church. We will meet on a Sunday evening in the Nell Bice Conference Room.

### **What risks might you experience from being in this study?**

“The risk involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.”

### **How will your personal information be protected?**

The records of this project will be kept private. Project records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. Data collected from you may be shared for use in future research studies or with other researchers. If data collected from you is shared any information that could identify you, if applicable, will be removed before the data is shared.

- Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.

- Data will be stored in a password locked computer. It will be destroyed after three years.
- Interviews will be recorded. Interviews are stored on a password locked iPhone.

### **Is study participation voluntary?**

Participation in this project is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or Cypress Baptist Church. If you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any questions or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

### **Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?**

The researcher conducting this project is John Bodine. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact him at 318-230-4309 or [jbodine@cypressbaptist.org](mailto:jbodine@cypressbaptist.org). You may contact the project manager's faculty sponsor, Dr. Norman Mathers, at [nmathers@liberty.edu](mailto:nmathers@liberty.edu).

### **Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a project participant?**

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this project and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or e-mail at [irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

### **Your Consent**

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in the project. Make sure you understand what the project is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The project manager will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the project after you sign the document, you can contact the project team using the information provided above.

*I have read and understand the above the information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in this project.*

- The project manager has my permission to audio-record me as part of participation in this project.

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Printed Subject Name

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Signature

## **Consent for High School**

**Title of the Project:** A Look at Short-Term Missions in the Context of Cypress Baptist Church as a Sending Unit

**Principal Investigator:** John Bodine, Liberty University

### **Invitation to be Part of the Project**

You are invited to participate in a project study. In order to participate, you must be 18 and a member of Cypress Baptist Church. Taking part in this project is voluntary. You are being asked because you currently serving on a short-term mission team for high school students.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding to take part in this project.

### **What is the study about, and why is it being done?**

The purpose of this project is to seek answers as to why many of Cypress members are not part of the ministry of short-term mission at Cypress Baptist Church. The goal is to read and listen to the participants to hear real life answers and then begin the process of alleviating the reasons to see more involved in short-term missions at Cypress. This communication will help Cypress see why people are going and what changes they are making after returning.

### **What will happen if you take part in this study**

If you agree to be part of this project, I will ask you to do the following steps.

1. Once you provide consent, I will send you a questionnaire by e-mail to be sent back to me with your answers within two weeks.
2. After all questionnaires have been turned in, we will meet in a focus group to discuss with others your answers and to spur more discussions on the subject of short-term missions at Cypress Baptist Church. We will meet on a Sunday evening in the Nell Bice Conference Room.

### **What risks might you experience from being in this study?**

“The risk involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.”

### **How will your personal information be protected?**

The records of this project will be kept private. Project records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. Data collected from you may be shared for use in future research studies or with other researchers. If data collected from you is shared any information that could identify you, if applicable, will be removed before the data is shared.

- Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.

- Data will be stored in a password locked computer. It will be destroyed after three years.
- Interviews will be recorded. Interviews are stored on a password locked iPhone.

### **Is study participation voluntary?**

Participation in this project is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or Cypress Baptist Church. If you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any questions or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

### **Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?**

The researcher conducting this project is John Bodine. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact him at 318-230-4309 or [jbodine@cypressbaptist.org](mailto:jbodine@cypressbaptist.org). You may contact the project manager's faculty sponsor, Dr. Norman Mathers, at [nmathers@liberty.edu](mailto:nmathers@liberty.edu).

### **Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a project participant?**

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this project and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or e-mail at [irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

### **Your Consent**

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in the project. Make sure you understand what the project is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The project manager will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the project after you sign the document, you can contact the project team using the information provided above.

*I have read and understand the above the information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in this project.*

- The project manager has my permission to audio-record me as part of participation in this project.

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Printed Subject Name

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Signature

## **Consent for Missions Partners**

**Title of the Project:** A Look at Short-Term Missions in the Context of Cypress Baptist Church as a Sending Unit

**Principal Investigator:** John Bodine, Liberty University

### **Invitation to be Part of the Project**

You are invited to participate in a project study. In order to participate, you must be 18 and a member of Cypress Baptist Church. Taking part in this project is voluntary. You are being asked because you are one of the mission partners for Cypress.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding to take part in this project.

### **What is the study about, and why is it being done?**

The purpose of this project is to seek answers as to why many of Cypress members are not part of the ministry of short-term mission at Cypress Baptist Church. The goal is to read and listen to the participants to hear real life answers and then begin the process of alleviating the reasons to see more involved in short-term missions at Cypress. This communication will help Cypress see why people are going and what changes they are making after returning.

### **What will happen if you take part in this study**

If you agree to be part of this project, I will ask you to do the following steps.

1. Once you provide consent, I will send you a questionnaire by e-mail to be sent back to me with your answers within two weeks.
2. After all questionnaires have been turned in, we will meet in a focus group to discuss with others your answers and to spur more discussions on the subject of short-term missions at Cypress Baptist Church. We will meet on a Sunday evening in the Nell Bice Conference Room.

### **What risks might you experience from being in this study?**

“The risk involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.”

### **How will your personal information be protected?**

The records of this project will be kept private. Project records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. Data collected from you may be shared for use in future research studies or with other researchers. If data collected from you is shared any information that could identify you, if applicable, will be removed before the data is shared.

- Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.



- Data will be stored in a password locked computer. It will be destroyed after three years.
- Interviews will be recorded. Interviews are stored on a password locked iPhone.

### **Is study participation voluntary?**

Participation in this project is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or Cypress Baptist Church. If you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any questions or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

### **Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?**

The researcher conducting this project is John Bodine. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact him at 318-230-4309 or [jbodine@cypressbaptist.org](mailto:jbodine@cypressbaptist.org). You may contact the project manager's faculty sponsor, Dr. Norman Mathers, at [nmathers@liberty.edu](mailto:nmathers@liberty.edu).

### **Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a project participant?**

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this project and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or e-mail at [irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

### **Your Consent**

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in the project. Make sure you understand what the project is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The project manager will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the project after you sign the document, you can contact the project team using the information provided above.

*I have read and understand the above the information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in this project.*

- The project manager has my permission to audio-record me as part of participation in this project.

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Printed Subject Name

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Signature

## **Consent for Non-Participants**

**Title of the Project:** A Look at Short-Term Missions in the Context of Cypress Baptist Church as a Sending Unit

**Principal Investigator:** John Bodine, Liberty University

### **Invitation to be Part of the Project**

You are invited to participate in a project study. In order to participate, you must be 18 and a member of Cypress Baptist Church. Taking part in this project is voluntary. You are being asked because you were recommended by another staff member to be part of this project.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding to take part in this project.

### **What is the study about, and why is it being done?**

The purpose of this project is to seek answers as to why many of Cypress members are not part of the ministry of short-term mission at Cypress Baptist Church. The goal is to read and listen to the participants to hear real life answers and then begin the process of alleviating the reasons to see more involved in short-term missions at Cypress. This communication will help Cypress see why people are going and what changes they are making after returning.

### **What will happen if you take part in this study**

If you agree to be part of this project, I will ask you to do the following steps.

1. Once you provide consent, I will send you a questionnaire by e-mail to be sent back to me with your answers within two weeks.
2. After all questionnaires have been turned in, we will meet in a focus group to discuss with others your answers and to spur more discussions on the subject of short-term missions at Cypress Baptist Church. We will meet on a Sunday evening in the Nell Bice Conference Room.

### **What risks might you experience from being in this study?**

“The risk involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.”

### **How will your personal information be protected?**

The records of this project will be kept private. Project records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. Data collected from you may be shared for use in future research studies or with other researchers. If data collected from you is shared any information that could identify you, if applicable, will be removed before the data is shared.

- Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.

- Data will be stored in a password locked computer. It will be destroyed after three years.
- Interviews will be recorded. Interviews are stored on a password locked iPhone.

### **Is study participation voluntary?**

Participation in this project is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or Cypress Baptist Church. If you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any questions or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

### **Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?**

The researcher conducting this project is John Bodine. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact him at 318-230-4309 or [jbodine@cypressbaptist.org](mailto:jbodine@cypressbaptist.org). You may contact the project manager's faculty sponsor, Dr. Norman Mathers, at [nmathers@liberty.edu](mailto:nmathers@liberty.edu).

### **Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a project participant?**

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this project and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or e-mail at [irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

### **Your Consent**

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in the project. Make sure you understand what the project is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The project manager will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the project after you sign the document, you can contact the project team using the information provided above.

*I have read and understand the above the information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in this project.*

- The project manager has my permission to audio-record me as part of participation in this project.

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Printed Subject Name

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Signature

## **Consent for Past-Participants**

**Title of the Project:** A Look at Short-Term Missions in the Context of Cypress Baptist Church as a Sending Unit

**Principal Investigator:** John Bodine, Liberty University

### **Invitation to be Part of the Project**

You are invited to participate in a project study. In order to participate, you must be 18 and a member of Cypress Baptist Church. Taking part in this project is voluntary. You are being asked because you have served on past short-term mission trips.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding to take part in this project.

### **What is the study about, and why is it being done?**

The purpose of this project is to seek answers as to why many of Cypress members are not part of the ministry of short-term mission at Cypress Baptist Church. The goal is to read and listen to the participants to hear real life answers and then begin the process of alleviating the reasons to see more involved in short-term missions at Cypress. This communication will help Cypress see why people are going and what changes they are making after returning.

### **What will happen if you take part in this study**

If you agree to be part of this project, I will ask you to do the following steps.

1. Once you provide consent, I will send you a questionnaire by e-mail to be sent back to me with your answers within two weeks.
2. After all questionnaires have been turned in, we will meet in a focus group to discuss with others your answers and to spur more discussions on the subject of short-term missions at Cypress Baptist Church. We will meet on a Sunday evening in the Nell Bice Conference Room.

### **What risks might you experience from being in this study?**

“The risk involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.”

### **How will your personal information be protected?**

The records of this project will be kept private. Project records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. Data collected from you may be shared for use in future research studies or with other researchers. If data collected from you is shared any information that could identify you, if applicable, will be removed before the data is shared.

- Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.

- Data will be stored in a password locked computer. It will be destroyed after three years.
- Interviews will be recorded. Interviews are stored on a password locked iPhone.

### **Is study participation voluntary?**

Participation in this project is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or Cypress Baptist Church. If you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any questions or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

### **Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?**

The researcher conducting this project is John Bodine. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact him at 318-230-4309 or [jbodine@cypressbaptist.org](mailto:jbodine@cypressbaptist.org). You may contact the project manager's faculty sponsor, Dr. Norman Mathers, at [nmathers@liberty.edu](mailto:nmathers@liberty.edu).

### **Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a project participant?**

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this project and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or e-mail at [irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

### **Your Consent**

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in the project. Make sure you understand what the project is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The project manager will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the project after you sign the document, you can contact the project team using the information provided above.

*I have read and understand the above the information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in this project.*

- The project manager has my permission to audio-record me as part of participation in this project.

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Printed Subject Name

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Signature

## **Consent Missions Pastor**

**Title of the Project:** A Look at Short-Term Missions in the Context of Cypress Baptist Church as a Sending Unit

**Principal Investigator:** John Bodine, Liberty University

### **Invitation to be Part of the Project**

You are invited to participate in a project study. In order to participate, you must be 18 and a member of Cypress Baptist Church. Taking part in this project is voluntary. You are being asked because you currently serve as Missions Pastor in the local area.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding to take part in this project.

### **What is the study about, and why is it being done?**

The purpose of this project is to seek answers as to why many of Cypress members are not part of the ministry of short-term mission at Cypress Baptist Church. The goal is to read and listen to the participants to hear real life answers and then begin the process of alleviating the reasons to see more involved in short-term missions at Cypress. This communication will help Cypress see why people are going and what changes they are making after returning.

### **What will happen if you take part in this study**

If you agree to be part of this project, I will ask you to do the following steps.

1. Once you provide consent, I will send you a questionnaire by e-mail to be sent back to me with your answers within two weeks.
2. After all questionnaires have been turned in, we will meet in a focus group to discuss with others your answers and to spur more discussions on the subject of short-term missions at Cypress Baptist Church. We will meet on a Sunday evening in the Nell Bice Conference Room.

### **What risks might you experience from being in this study?**

“The risk involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.”

### **How will your personal information be protected?**

The records of this project will be kept private. Project records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. Data collected from you may be shared for use in future research studies or with other researchers. If data collected from you is shared any information that could identify you, if applicable, will be removed before the data is shared.

- Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.

- Data will be stored in a password locked computer. It will be destroyed after three years.
- Interviews will be recorded. Interviews are stored on a password locked iPhone.

### **Is study participation voluntary?**

Participation in this project is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or Cypress Baptist Church. If you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any questions or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

### **Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?**

The researcher conducting this project is John Bodine. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact him at 318-230-4309 or [jbodine@cypressbaptist.org](mailto:jbodine@cypressbaptist.org). You may contact the project manager's faculty sponsor, Dr. Norman Mathers, at [nmathers@liberty.edu](mailto:nmathers@liberty.edu).

### **Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a project participant?**

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this project and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or e-mail at [irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

### **Your Consent**

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in the project. Make sure you understand what the project is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The project manager will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the project after you sign the document, you can contact the project team using the information provided above.

*I have read and understand the above the information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in this project.*

- The project manager has my permission to audio-record me as part of participation in this project.

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Printed Subject Name

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Signature

## **Consent for Senior Pastor**

**Title of the Project:** A Look at Short-Term Missions in the Context of Cypress Baptist Church as a Sending Unit

**Principal Investigator:** John Bodine, Liberty University

### **Invitation to be Part of the Project**

You are invited to participate in a project study. In order to participate, you must be 18 and a member of Cypress Baptist Church. Taking part in this project is voluntary. You are being asked because you are the Senior Pastor of Cypress Baptist Church.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding to take part in this project.

### **What is the study about, and why is it being done?**

The purpose of this project is to seek answers as to why many of Cypress members are not part of the ministry of short-term mission at Cypress Baptist Church. The goal is to read and listen to the participants to hear real life answers and then begin the process of alleviating the reasons to see more involved in short-term missions at Cypress. This communication will help Cypress see why people are going and what changes they are making after returning.

### **What will happen if you take part in this study**

If you agree to be part of this project, I will ask you to do the following steps.

1. Once you provide consent, I will send you a questionnaire by e-mail to be sent back to me with your answers within two weeks.
2. After all questionnaires have been turned in, we will meet in a focus group to discuss with others your answers and to spur more discussions on the subject of short-term missions at Cypress Baptist Church. We will meet on a Sunday evening in the Nell Bice Conference Room.

### **What risks might you experience from being in this study?**

“The risk involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.”

### **How will your personal information be protected?**

The records of this project will be kept private. Project records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. Data collected from you may be shared for use in future research studies or with other researchers. If data collected from you is shared any information that could identify you, if applicable, will be removed before the data is shared.

- Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.



- Data will be stored in a password locked computer. It will be destroyed after three years.
- Interviews will be recorded. Interviews are stored on a password locked iPhone.

### **Is study participation voluntary?**

Participation in this project is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or Cypress Baptist Church. If you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any questions or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

### **Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?**

The researcher conducting this project is John Bodine. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact him at 318-230-4309 or [jbodine@cypressbaptist.org](mailto:jbodine@cypressbaptist.org). You may contact the project manager's faculty sponsor, Dr. Norman Mathers, at [nmathers@liberty.edu](mailto:nmathers@liberty.edu).

### **Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a project participant?**

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this project and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or e-mail at [irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

### **Your Consent**

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in the project. Make sure you understand what the project is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The project manager will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the project after you sign the document, you can contact the project team using the information provided above.

*I have read and understand the above the information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in this project.*

- The project manager has my permission to audio-record me as part of participation in this project.

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Printed Subject Name

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Signature

## **Consent for Staff Member**

**Title of the Project:** A Look at Short-Term Missions in the Context of Cypress Baptist Church as a Sending Unit

**Principal Investigator:** John Bodine, Liberty University

### **Invitation to be Part of the Project**

You are invited to participate in a project study. In order to participate, you must be 18 and a member of Cypress Baptist Church. Taking part in this project is voluntary. You are being asked because you have lived in North Bossier for most of your life.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding to take part in this project.

### **What is the study about, and why is it being done?**

The purpose of this project is to seek answers as to why many of Cypress members are not part of the ministry of short-term mission at Cypress Baptist Church. The goal is to read and listen to the participants to hear real life answers and then begin the process of alleviating the reasons to see more involved in short-term missions at Cypress. This communication will help Cypress see why people are going and what changes they are making after returning.

### **What will happen if you take part in this study**

If you agree to be part of this project, I will ask you to do the following steps.

1. Once you provide consent, I will send you a questionnaire by e-mail to be sent back to me with your answers within two weeks.
2. After all questionnaires have been turned in, we will meet in a focus group to discuss with others your answers and to spur more discussions on the subject of short-term missions at Cypress Baptist Church. We will meet on a Sunday evening in the Nell Bice Conference Room.

### **What risks might you experience from being in this study?**

“The risk involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.”

### **How will your personal information be protected?**

The records of this project will be kept private. Project records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. Data collected from you may be shared for use in future research studies or with other researchers. If data collected from you is shared any information that could identify you, if applicable, will be removed before the data is shared.

- Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.

- Data will be stored in a password locked computer. It will be destroyed after three years.
- Interviews will be recorded. Interviews are stored on a password locked iPhone.

### **Is study participation voluntary?**

Participation in this project is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or Cypress Baptist Church. If you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any questions or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

### **Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?**

The researcher conducting this project is John Bodine. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact him at 318-230-4309 or [jbodine@cypressbaptist.org](mailto:jbodine@cypressbaptist.org). You may contact the project manager's faculty sponsor, Dr. Norman Mathers, at [nmathers@liberty.edu](mailto:nmathers@liberty.edu).

### **Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a project participant?**

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this project and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or e-mail at [irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

### **Your Consent**

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in the project. Make sure you understand what the project is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The project manager will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the project after you sign the document, you can contact the project team using the information provided above.

*I have read and understand the above the information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in this project.*

- The project manager has my permission to audio-record me as part of participation in this project.

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Printed Subject Name

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Signature

## **Parental Consent**

**Title of the Project:** A Look at Short-Term Missions in the Context of Cypress Baptist Church as a Sending Unit

**Principal Investigator:** John Bodine, Liberty University

### **Invitation to be Part of the Project**

\_\_\_\_\_ is invited to participate in a project study. Participants must be at least 15 and in high school. Taking part in this project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to allow your \_\_\_\_\_ to take part in this project.

### **What is the study about, and why is it being done?**

The purpose of this project is to seek answers as to why many of Cypress members are not part of the ministry of short-term mission at Cypress Baptist Church. The goal is to read and listen to the participants to hear real life answers and then begin the process of alleviating the reasons to see more involved in short-term missions at Cypress. This communication will help Cypress see why people are going and what changes they are making after returning.

### **What will happen if you take part in this study**

If you agree to allow your \_\_\_\_\_ be part of this project, I will ask you to do the following steps.

1. Once you provide consent, I will send you a questionnaire by e-mail to be sent back to me with your answers within two weeks.
2. After all questionnaires have been turned in, we will meet in a focus group to discuss with others your answers and to spur more discussions on the subject of short-term missions at Cypress Baptist Church. We will meet on a Sunday evening in the Nell Bice Conference Room.

### **What risks might you experience from being in this study?**

“The risk involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.”

### **How will your personal information be protected?**

The records of this project will be kept private. Project records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. Data collected from you may be shared for use in future research studies or with other researchers. If data collected from you is shared any information that could identify you, if applicable, will be removed before the data is shared.

- Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.

- Data will be stored in a password locked computer. It will be destroyed after three years.
- Interviews will be recorded. Interviews are stored on a password locked iPhone.

### **Is study participation voluntary?**

Participation in this project is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or Cypress Baptist Church. If you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any questions or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

### **Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?**

The researcher conducting this project is John Bodine. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact him at 318-230-4309 or [jbodine@cypressbaptist.org](mailto:jbodine@cypressbaptist.org). You may contact the project manager's faculty sponsor, Dr. Norman Mathers, at [nmathers@liberty.edu](mailto:nmathers@liberty.edu).

### **Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a project participant?**

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this project and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or e-mail at [irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

### **Your Consent**

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in the project. Make sure you understand what the project is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The project manager will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the project after you sign the document, you can contact the project team using the information provided above.

*I have read and understand the above the information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in this project.*

- The project manager has my permission to audio-record me as part of participation in this project.

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Printed Child's/Students Name

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Parent's Signature

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Date

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Minor's Signature

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Date

June 5, 2020

Non-participant age groups

Dear Participant:

As a graduate student in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting project as part of the requirements for a Doctoral degree. The purpose of my project is to study short-term mission trips at Cypress Baptist Church, and I am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study.

Participants must be a member of Cypress Baptist Church. Participants, if willing, will be asked to participate in a questionnaire and focus group or an interview. You are being asked because you have been recommended by another staff member to participate in this study. It should take approximately 30 minutes to do the questionnaire and an hour for the focus group to complete the procedures listed. The focus group meeting will take approximately an hour for completion. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential.

In order to participate, please contact me at 318-230-4309 or e-mail me at [jbodine@cypressbaptist.org](mailto:jbodine@cypressbaptist.org).

A consent document will be sent home with you because you are under 18. The consent document contains additional information about my research. Please sign the consent document and return it to me at the time of the interview/focus group/etc.

Sincerely,

John D. Bodine  
Mission Pastor  
318-230-4309  
[jbodine@cypressbaptist.org](mailto:jbodine@cypressbaptist.org)

June 5, 2020

Past Mission Team Participant

Dear Participant:

As a graduate student in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting project as part of the requirements for a Doctoral degree. The purpose of my project is to study short-term mission trips at Cypress Baptist Church, and I am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study.

Participants must be a member of Cypress Baptist Church. Participants, if willing, will be asked to participate in a questionnaire and focus group or an interview. You are being asked because you have participated in past mission trips with Cypress. It should take approximately 30 minutes to do the questionnaire and an hour for the focus group to complete the procedures listed. The focus group meeting will take approximately an hour for completion. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential.

In order to participate, please contact me at 318-230-4309 or e-mail me at [jbodine@cypressbaptist.org](mailto:jbodine@cypressbaptist.org).

A consent document will be sent home with you because you are under 18. The consent document contains additional information about my research. Please sign the consent document and return it to me at the time of the interview/focus group/etc.

Sincerely,

John D. Bodine  
Mission Pastor  
318-230-4309  
[jbodine@cypressbaptist.org](mailto:jbodine@cypressbaptist.org)

June 5, 2020

Current Mission Team Participant

Dear Participant:

As a graduate student in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting project as part of the requirements for a Doctoral degree. The purpose of my project is to study short-term mission trips at Cypress Baptist Church, and I am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study.

Participants must be a member of Cypress Baptist Church. Participants, if willing, will be asked to participate in a questionnaire and focus group or an interview. You are being asked because you are part of a current mission team. It should take approximately 30 minutes to do the questionnaire and an hour for the focus group to complete the procedures listed. The focus group meeting will take approximately an hour for completion. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential.

In order to participate, please contact me at 318-230-4309 or e-mail me at [jbodine@cypressbaptist.org](mailto:jbodine@cypressbaptist.org).

A consent document will be sent home with you because you are under 18. The consent document contains additional information about my research. Please sign the consent document and return it to me at the time of the interview/focus group/etc.

Sincerely,

John D. Bodine  
Mission Pastor  
318-230-4309  
[jbodine@cypressbaptist.org](mailto:jbodine@cypressbaptist.org)



**LIBERTY UNIVERSITY**  
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

July 9, 2020

John Bodine  
Norman Mathers

Re: IRB Application - IRB-FY19-20-404 A Look at Short-Term Mission Trips in the Context of  
Cypress Baptist Church as a Sending Unit

Dear John Bodine, Norman Mathers:

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study does not classify as human subjects research. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your IRB application.

Decision: No Human Subjects Research

Explanation: Your project is not considered human subjects research because it consists of quality improvement activities, which are not generalizable. See 45 CFR 46.102(d).

Please note that this decision only applies to your current research application, and any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued non-human subjects research status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

If you have any questions about this determination or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your application's status, please email us at [irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

Sincerely,

**G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP**

*Administrative Chair of Institutional Research*  
**Research Ethics Office**