

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY  
JOHN W. RAWLINGS SCHOOL OF DIVINITY

LONG-TERM PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN COMMUNITIES  
AND MISSION ORGANIZATIONS:  
A CASE STUDY

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment  
Of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Philosophy  
by  
Rebecca Boggs Bishop

Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

2024

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April 15, 2024

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore the long-term partnership of World Changers with the community of Chattanooga, Tennessee to understand best practices for creating similar cross-sector partnerships involving short-term mission work. Within this research, long-term partnership is defined as an arrangement existing for at least ten years. The study utilized the theories of covenant community (Lingenfelter, 2008), legitimate peripheral participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991), and cross-sector social-oriented partnerships (Selsky & Parker, 2005) to guide the research. The study considered the perspectives of community members, ministry leaders, and mission organization leadership to determine benefits and areas of concern related to a long-term mission partnership with a locality. After examining the data, the researcher was able to determine areas to consider and/or address when developing similar partnerships. While the impact of mission service on participants has been studied, and cross-sector partnerships of other kinds have been examined, there is not much research related to the impact of creating partnerships between these types of mission organizations and communities or best practices for beginning such partnerships. The research demonstrated that Christian ministries can establish partnerships with other organizations that may be secular in nature. It also offers suggestions to improve potential success when beginning and striving to continue cross-sector partnerships.

*Keywords:* Missions, Partnerships, World Changers, Cross-Sector, Cross-Cultural, Covenant Community, Legitimate Peripheral Participation

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## **Dedication**

This work is dedicated to my husband, Brad, my children, Jonathan and David, and the women who love my sons, Katie and Tiffany, for their love and support throughout this journey of faith. In addition, I dedicate it to the newest member of our family, my grandson Charlie, who has brought another level of love into our lives. Finally, it is dedicated in loving memory of my pastor, friend, and mentor, Dr. Henry “Lew” Bennett who guided and encouraged me through the first two years of the program before he moved to his heavenly home.

## Acknowledgments

When God laid it on my heart several years ago to pursue this degree, I was filled with excitement and trepidation. I did not know if I could truly meet all the requirements while working and keeping up with everything at home. Through His continued presence and inspiration, I have reached this point. There were many times along the way that He put a voice in my head guiding me to the right topic or resource. None of this would have been possible without Him in my life.

Throughout the time I have been in this program, there have been many professors who pushed me to learn and grow. While there were times I did not like some of them very much, their continued support and encouragement as well as their guiding instruction brought me to a better place. When I began the actual process of fine-tuning my prospectus, I was blessed to meet my supervisor, Dr. Stephen Grusendorf. He forced me to critically think about what I was doing and helped get the words on paper in just the right way. All the while, he never lost patience with me (at least not that he let show) even when I feared he would. I definitely could not have reached the finish line without his guidance. I also thank Dr. Bredfeldt for serving as my second reader and offering additional guidance and encouragement.

The data for this research study would not have been possible without those who were willing to participate. I appreciate the time spent completing surveys, sitting through interviews, and providing links to other resources. I am especially grateful to the leadership of World Changers who allowed me access to whatever I needed and gave honest responses to my many questions.

There have been friends along the way who have encouraged me when I was frustrated, given me time to vent, offered me reasons to laugh, helped me celebrate the victories, and stolen

me away for a much-needed break. Without their shoulders to lean on, I would have struggled to keep pushing on when things got difficult, especially throughout the pandemic days. Thank you to Nichole and Brandon, Joyce and John, Jeff and Teresa, Mary Lee, Lee, John, Amanda B., Michelle, Fred and Kathi, and Amanda J. for always having just the right words to keep me going. I cherish the memories made over the years and look forward to making many more, especially since I will have more time for fun now.

One of my most important friends and mentors sadly passed away in 2021 before my dream was realized. My late pastor, Lew, was the first person to tell me I could accomplish this. When I told him I was considering it, his exact words were, "Good! You should." I am so thankful that I had two years of bouncing ideas off him, asking his advice about research, and sharing what I was learning. I will be forever grateful for the relationship we had for 20 years.

Finally, I cannot make acknowledgements without recognizing my family. Through this endeavor, my children (though grown and on their own) have been there pushing me to succeed. I hope that it will make them proud to see what I have accomplished. Along the way, we have gained two daughters-in-law and welcomed our first grandchild, Charlie. God has continued to bless my life as I pushed onward through this journey, even when my faith and walk with Him fell short. My husband, Brad, has been ever-present. He has overlooked the messy house, eaten cereal for dinner, let me cry and complain, and has stuck by me through it all. I would never have made it this far without him, and I am thankful every day that God brought him into my life.

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### **List of Abbreviations**

Chattanooga Times Free Press (CTFP)

Chattanooga Times Free Press Breaking News (CTFP BN)

Coalicion de Salud Comunitaria (COSACO)

Community Redevelopment Agencies (CRA)

Cross-Cultural Partnership (CCP)

Cross-Sector Community Care Teams (CCTs)

Cross-Sector Partnership (CSP)

Cross-Sector Social Partnership (CSSP)

Faith-Based Organization (FBO)

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Leadership, Education, and Development Program (LEAD)

Legitimate Peripheral Participation (LPP)

News12: Local CBS-affiliated television station in Chattanooga (WDEF)

NewsChannel 9: Local ABC-affiliated television station in Chattanooga (SBGTV, WTVC)

Non-Governmental Organization (NGO)

One Chattanooga: Relief and Recovery Plan Document (OCRRP)

World Changers (WC)

## CHAPTER ONE: RESEARCH CONCERN

### Introduction

The positive aspects of service-learning or mission service opportunities on the development of youth participants have been clearly demonstrated (Ballew, 2017; Beyerlein et al., 2011; Blezian, 2004; Kitchen, 2014). Such experiences offer an opportunity to explore the world and allow putting into practice what has been learned. Service-learning or hands-on participation is not a new concept, however. Jesus was known to use this same technique with his disciples, training them to take over His ministry by guiding them from observation to full participation in carrying out their mission to share His love<sup>1</sup> (*King James Bible*, 1769/2023, John 13:34-35; Col. 3:12-15; Heb. 13:1; 1 Pet. 4:8). More recently, this process has come to be called legitimate peripheral participation (LPP) (Csinos, 2010). Willis and Coe (2014) describe this concept as five steps for Christian growth and preparation to participate on mission for God:

1. I do, you watch.
2. I do, you help.
3. You do, I help.
4. You do, I watch.
5. You do, someone else watches (p.145).

Most of the recent research on service-learning has focused on its impact on the individual. Consequently, there is not much information regarding impacts on the communities being served. Jones (1998) and Wilder (2004) both mention this as an area of possible research.

There is also a lack of research providing suggestions or best practices for developing mission partnerships that offer service experiences and ministry to communities. Selsky and

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all references and quotations from the Bible are from the King James Version Bible (1769/2023)

Parker (2005) use the term “cross-sector social oriented partnerships” (CSSPs) to explain these types of relationships between organizations that exist in different sectors of society. One of the benefits of these partnerships is that resources can be combined to address the needs of a project. These resources may include manpower, finances, knowledge, or physical materials (Sanders, 2016). Schmid and Almog-Bar (2020) define this cross-sector type of partnership as “a multi-organizational arrangement for solving problems and achieving goals that one sector cannot achieve or will have difficulty achieving alone” (p. 286). As will be discussed later, for a partner Christian organization, collaboration becomes a tool to demonstrate the biblical principles of the body of Christ working together and making the most of available shared resources.

### **Background to the Problem**

Short-term mission experiences that offer students the opportunity to put faith into practice have become an important part of many youth programs in mission-oriented churches (Beyerlein et al., 2011; Blezian, 2004; Hancock, 2014; Howell, 2009). Jesus practiced this instructional technique with his disciples as he prepared them to continue the work of the Kingdom of God after His crucifixion (Csinos, 2010). This hands-on approach to teaching and learning has been embraced by educators, particularly as demonstrated in the instructional ideas presented by John Dewey (Anthony & Benson, 2011). Service-learning experiences are often incorporated into the curriculum of Christian education, especially in college and university settings (Lewing, 2019). Lave and Wenger (1991) propose that in this method, which they termed legitimate peripheral participation (LPP), learning is accomplished through actual involvement in the work.

Much research has been conducted on the impact of participation in these mission experiences, particularly on the spiritual growth and development of the students (Ballew, 2017;

Farrell, 2013; Hancock, 2014; Wilder, 2004). Lewing (2019) notes that the research has demonstrated the positive role service-learning has on academics, civic engagement, and personal growth. However, there is not much information available about the impact on the communities where service takes place. Additionally, information about how the work is perceived in the places served and whether having a long-term relationship with a mission-oriented organization makes a difference is also lacking. According to van Engen (2019), “there is an urgent need to discover and create new patterns of missionary partnership among Christians worldwide” (p. 53). This researcher wonders how successful partnerships are formed and what is necessary to maintain them. By examining an established partnership of this nature, suggestions can be made to assist other groups who may be interested in developing the same kind of relationships.

### **Theological Context**

The Bible presents the body of Christ as interdependent (1 Cor. 12:19). This interdependence was described by van der Water (2016) as a common life for the church since its parts belong together. According to Willis and Coe (2014), the church’s role is to act as a united family with “committed, authentic, and caring relationships” (p.87). Christians are called to share God’s message of salvation, and one way to do this is through service to others. Matthew 28:19-20 commands believers to “Go therefore and teach all nations.” The Second Vatican Council encouraged believers to reach out to those who struggle as a way of participating in *Missio Dei* (Haasl, 2018). Serving others is a good way to build relationships, which was modeled by Christ Himself (Willis & Coe, 2014). Meeting physical needs such as repairing homes and feeding the hungry are ways to open doors to sharing the Gospel. Being living examples of the love of God and His image is important for believers. Doing so allows believers to demonstrate discipleship

rather than just using words to tell others about Him. Pope Francis encouraged Catholic believers to “become a community of missionary disciples” even if meant getting out of their comfort zones (Haasl, 2018, p. 408). It is this love that binds Christians together as the Body of Christ (Logan, 2019). The world needs people who are willing to apply God’s truth in their everyday lives in order to help others see and hear the Gospel message (Willis & Coe, 2014). Serving on behalf of Christ allows the Fruit of the Spirit to become more evident. It also contributes to the disciple’s spiritual growth.

Paul offers an example of partnerships in his Epistles by trying to gather churches together to assist the church in Jerusalem. He attempts to establish personal connections between the churches in 1 Corinthians 16. The term *koinonia* is often used to demonstrate partnerships formed to achieve ministry goals (Ogereau, 2012). These types of relationships require unity among those involved. In mission work, team members must practice unity among themselves and those they serve, a concept demonstrated in Philippians 2:1-4. Lingenfelter (2008) states it this way, “we cannot accomplish the work of the kingdom of God unless we are willing to work together in the fellowship of a loving community” (p. 18). Christian covenant communities are formed through faith and hope and provide opportunities to share this kingdom work rather than requiring Christians to work alone (Logan, 2019). Living life on mission for God means putting aside one’s own preferences. This often requires stepping out of one’s comfort zone to put God’s mission first (Willis & Coe, 2014).

In 1 Peter 2:9-10, Paul offers another perspective of the role Christians must share with others as suggested by Lingenfelter (2008). Paul reminds believers that they are chosen and special (1 Pet. 2:9). As such, they have a mission given by God: to proclaim Him in the darkness of the world (1 Pet. 2:9). Since believers have received mercy, they have this obligation as His

people (1 Pet. 2:10). Practicing service through mission experiences allows opportunity to fulfill this duty and radiate light in the dark.

### **Historical Context**

Much of the research previously done relative to mission experiences focuses on personal development of the participants (Csinos, 2010; James et al., 2015; Kitchen, 2014). The term transformational learning is sometimes used (James et al., 2015). As participants grow more like Christ, they will be better prepared to demonstrate His love to the world (Kitchen, 2014). Often, participating in these experiences creates a desire to continue to serve in other ways (Csinos, 2010). Logan (2019) suggests this work in the world should be part of believers' witness, not only in the society where they live but also around the world. Although the research demonstrates that hands-on mission service can impact spiritual growth and development into the image of God, there has not been as much focus on how to develop a successful partnership between a community and an organization wishing to offer these opportunities. According to van Engen (2019), this is an area that is urgently needed, developing new ways to form missionary partnerships among Christians.

World Changers (WC), a Christian non-profit organization has been offering students mission opportunities since 1990, when the first project was hosted in Briceville, Tennessee. Throughout the summer, youth travel to cities across the United States where they are divided into work teams with students and adults from other places. Many of these cities have established partnerships with WC that have existed for years, even as the organization has undergone significant leadership changes. Communities are different in their cultures, project selection process, and connections with other community groups (World Changers, 2023). Several cities have created long-term partnerships with WC, hosting mission projects for ten years or longer. In

each community, local leaders and organizations work with WC coordinators, some of whom are volunteers, and summer staff to determine what projects to complete, how to house and feed mission participants, and to arrange other experiences for volunteers to better see and understand the community they are serving (World Changers, 2023).

### **Sociological Context**

Strong partnerships require certain elements to remain effective. In John 15, Jesus offers trust, sacrifice, confidence, and selflessness as key components to the relationships between members of partnerships (van der Water, 2016). Working together will require groups to trust and have confidence in one another. The partners must determine the most efficient way to include and engage the various stakeholders (Horan, 2019). Selflessness and sacrifice may be necessary to make decisions for the greater good. Having multiple organizations form a partnership provides a larger labor force and resource base (Weng et al., 2016). When organizations combine their available resources, the potential to address needs multiplies. They can “secure more and diversified resources to address social and environmental problems that cannot be solved by a single sector” (Dong & Rim, 2022, p. 952). The partner groups can work together to determine the best use of those resources as well as what needs should take precedence and how best to meet them (Loh et al., 2016; Selsky & Parker, 2005; Trim & Lee, 2008).

Working through partnerships allows the best use of available resources, particularly in diverse communities. It is vital that partners share and use resources in ways that enhance the overall performance of the partnership (Schmid & Almog-Bar, 2020). Governments and nonprofits may have resource limitations due to funding sources, so this sharing can help the partners achieve more together than they could alone (Dunkenberger et al., 2019). According to

Horan (2019), when partnerships are developed, it helps to strengthen the ability to implement projects to meet the desired goals by creating an integrated approach. Joniškienė et al. (2020) suggest that the changing challenges in the world encourage organizations from different sectors to develop new ways to interact. Partnerships between these NGOs and other sectors help to consider complex problems in innovative ways (Dong & Rim, 2022). As suggested by van der Water (2016), there should be “mutuality and accountability, shared decision-making, dialogue, joint advocacy, celebration of diversity, information-sharing, effective communication, shared vision, and capacity-building” (p. 59). When mission organizations come into an area, it is beneficial to have local connections who can assist in avoiding potential pitfalls to ensure positive service experiences.

### **Theoretical Context**

One of the theoretical frameworks driving this research project is the concept of covenant communities developed by Lingenfelter (2008). Covenant communities bring individual cultures together to focus on Christ’s culture. These communities are then able to work together to address needs and share the love of Christ. According to Logan (2019), “the theological virtues which give Christian covenant communities their distinctive character are never to be estranged from the work of cultivating life beyond communities of Christian faith” (p. 441) which is then evidenced through active love. Ideally, partnerships between communities and mission organizations present opportunity for the elements of a covenant community to be exemplified through service. Griffin (2016) emphasizes the most important part of this work is to learn about others and to build relationships with them. It has been suggested that collaboration of groups will make success more likely (Morrissey, 2013). Using shared resources allows the work to be divided and the strengths of many to be utilized. Expertise and access available to one member

of the partnership can benefit the project. This is tied to the biblical perspective of one body, as there are multiple parts working as one to achieve the goal.

There are eight core elements to develop a covenant community noted by Lingenfelter (2008). The first is identity in Christ as a chosen people, and the second is the presence of the Holy Spirit. These types of mission experiences are often conducted through Christian organizations and are carried out in the name of Christ. The third element is to love one another. This is a commandment from Jesus Himself, when he tells the Pharisees that the second great commandment is to “love your neighbor as yourself” (Matt. 22:39). Elements four and five require one body of people serving in diversity and unity. Serving on mission teams requires these latter three elements to be present to be effective in ministry. The final three elements offer suggestions for how to relate to others: submitting, speaking graciously, and restoring mercifully. Within any group of people there will be differences that need to be addressed. A covenant community will find ways to address these without hurting the goal of the group.

The second theoretical framework for this project is the concept of legitimate peripheral participation developed by Lave and Wenger (1991). Partnerships between mission organizations and communities offer an opportunity for those involved to learn through hands-on experiences. As participants work in various positions, there is the potential for taking on more responsibility over time. Organizational and community leaders can learn from one another. Participants also receive opportunity to learn how to share God’s love through training and mentoring. The WC program offers college students the opportunity to serve as summer staff and assist in coordinating work in various cities. Many staff members are former youth participants from prior years. Some serve for multiple summers, gaining more responsibility each year (World Changers, 2023).

The third and final theoretical framework supporting this research is cross-sector social partnerships (CSSPs). Through their work, Selsky and Parker (2005, 2010) developed the concept of CSSPs to better understand partnerships that cross sectors of society. These partnerships often form to address social issues, and the premise is that combining resources will increase the potential to meet those needs. According to Clarke and Fuller (2010), it is beneficial to form such a union when the capacity to meet goals exceeds a single group's abilities. These partnerships are often seen as a means of far-reaching impact that goes beyond the named goals of the work to be accomplished (Schmid & Almog-Bar, 2020). Dunkenberger et al. (2019) mention the critical role that nonprofit agencies have in assisting with human services projects as well as being more adaptable than other sectors to address changing needs. This is important as government services face uncertainty or funding cuts and need others to help fill the gaps created by shortfalls (Dunkenberger et al., 2019).

### **Statement of the Problem**

The impact of mission experiences on participants has been well researched describing the positive results from service-learning (Ballew, 2017; Beyerlein et al., 2011; Blezian, 2004; Farrell, 2013; Kitchen, 2014) as well as the personal development that can occur from participating in the same (Csinos, 2010; James et al., 2015; Kitchen, 2014). However, equal attention has not been given to best practices for creating long-term partnerships between mission organizations offering short-term service opportunities for youth and the communities which are served. 1 Corinthians 16 describes how the early churches were encouraged to form partnerships to enable better ministry in the spirit of *koinonia* (Ogereau, 2012). Jones (1998) and Wilder (2004) both suggested that this could be a topic of further research after completing their studies which specifically mention World Changers.

By examining a specific example of this type of partnership, it may be possible to develop suggestive guidelines for groups who are interested in establishing a similar type of relationship. This information could assist larger mission organizations or even individual churches desiring to create this kind of program. Research shows that partnerships between NGOs and other sectors of society, which Selsky and Parker (2005, 2010) term CSSPs, can be beneficial. Working together to meet goals allows resources to be shared and increases the potential for more to be accomplished (Dong & Rim, 2022; Dunkenberger et al., 2019; Horan, 2019; Joniškienė et al., 2020; Loh et al., 2016; Schmid & Almog-Bar, 2020; Selsky & Parker, 2005; Trim & Lee, 2008). Hesse et al. (2019) suggest that future research is needed to examine CSSPs in other contexts. By learning about successes and potential pitfalls, those wanting to start a partnership of this kind may have a better understanding of coordinating such an endeavor. This research study will seek to determine best practices and possible negative setbacks for mission organizations desiring to form a partnership service relationship with a community.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore the long-term partnership of World Changers with the community of Chattanooga, Tennessee to understand best practices for creating similar cross-sector partnerships involving short-term mission work. Within this research, long-term partnership is defined as an arrangement existing for at least ten years. There are three theories guiding this study. The first is covenant community as described by Lingenfelter (2008). According to Lingenfelter's description, covenant communities bind together with Christ as the center. The second is legitimate peripheral participation as described by Lave and Wenger (1991). This concept allows individuals to work towards full participation through a process of observation and gradual added responsibility. For this study, it is related to

students putting faith into action through mission service. The last is cross-sector social-oriented partnerships as described by Selsky and Parker (2005). These partnerships exist between organizations from different social sectors. The research for this study is related to long-term partnerships established between a community and a mission organization that offers these experiences for students.

### **Research Questions**

**RQ1.** What, if any, benefits do members of the community perceive from long-term partnerships between the community and mission organizations that offer short-term student mission experiences?

**RQ2.** What, if any, benefits do ministry leaders, both local to the community and those who have worked as participants, perceive from long-term partnerships between the community and mission organizations that offer short-term student mission experiences?

**RQ3.** What, if any, benefits do leaders and staff of mission organizations offering short-term student mission experiences perceive from long-term partnerships with communities?

**RQ4.** What, if any, potential areas exist that could improve or impede the success of long-term partnerships between the community and mission organizations that offer short-term student mission experiences?

Partnerships between mission organizations and communities involve different stakeholders. The research questions address the perceptions of each of them. Community leaders such as mayors, governing boards, and law enforcement will likely see things from a more business-like or economical perspective. People in the community include those who work with other organizations like Meals on Wheels, church members, or individuals directly impacted by the service being completed. Ministry leaders often are involved in service work, so their perception of the benefits or lack thereof by having short-term projects could help with further planning. They may also have insight into how local churches are able to assist with the partnership. Those who bring students to participate in the projects bring another viewpoint of how they perceive the operational aspects of the experience and may also have prior experiences

to use for comparison. The mission organization itself invests a lot of time and energy into planning and carrying out the mission work. Learning about what they see as beneficial could encourage other groups to begin similar endeavors. Finally, there is always the potential for pitfalls and other impediments to the success of forming and continuing these partnerships. Knowing these ahead of time could help other organizations prevent them from occurring.

## **Assumptions and Delimitations**

### **Research Assumptions**

Service-learning or mission service is often included in youth ministry programs throughout the United States. For the purpose of this study, it is assumed that participating in such an experience has an overall positive effect on the students.

### **Delimitations of the Research Design**

1. This research is delimited to a single community where World Changers, a Christian missions organization, has maintained a working relationship for ten years or more. The community chosen for the study was Chattanooga, Tennessee.
2. This research is further delimited to organizational partnerships offering short-term mission experiences which last up to 14 days. World Changers projects generally last five or seven days. It will not examine mission work that is of longer durations.
3. This research is also delimited to mission and service work carried out by students who have completed 6<sup>th</sup> grade through college. The impacts of the partnerships and work completed may be perceived differently than if the same projects were completed entirely by adults.

### **Definition of Terms**

1. *Church Leaders*: Individuals with leadership roles within churches, either locally or among those who travel for mission work. These may include, but are not limited to, associational leaders, pastoral staff, and youth ministry directors. These may be paid or volunteer positions.
2. *Community Leaders*: Individuals within a community who are involved in administration and management. These may include, but are not limited to, government officials, law enforcement, educators, or management of community-

- based programs such as United Way or Meals on Wheels. These may be paid or volunteer positions.
3. *Community Members*: Individuals within the community who are involved in some way with the mission work. These may include, but are not limited to, homeowners being served, non-staff church members, and neighbors. All community members invited to participate will be over the age of 18.
  4. *Covenant Community*: A Christian community based on trust, compassion, and witness that is united in a common goal or objective. The core elements for a covenant community are described by Lingenfelter (2008).
  5. *Cross-Sector Social Partnerships (CSSPs)*: Described by Selsky & Parker (2005), these partnerships form between organizations or groups from different parts of society. The partnerships are formed to combine resources to achieve goals unable to be completed by the member groups individually.
  6. *Faith-Based Organization (FBO)*: An organization that is associated with a religion, church, or group of religious entities.
  7. *Legitimate Peripheral Participation (LPP)*: Learning through hands-on participation under the guidance of those already familiar with the organization or group involved. As experience is gained, members are encouraged to take on deeper and more complex experiences over time. This strategy was used by Christ with the disciples, and the term comes from the work of Lave and Wenger (1991).
  8. *Long-term Partnerships*: Partnerships between mission organizations and communities that have continued for ten years or more (Loh et al., 2016; Rosko, 2017, Strier, 2014, Trim & Lee, 2008; van Hille et al., 2020).
  9. *Non-Governmental Organization (NGO)*: An organization that is separate from the government. Such groups often help provide aid and are involved in cross-sector partnerships to benefit society.
  10. *Short-term Missions*: Mission experiences that last for up to 14 days (Ballew, 2017; Hancock, 2014; Howell, 2009; Wilder, 2004).
  11. *World Changers (WC)*: Originally started under the North American Mission Board before becoming a part of the student ministries division of Lifeway Ministries and now existing as an independent non-profit organization which coordinates short-term mission experiences for students in cities throughout the United States (World Changers, 2023).

### Significance of the Study

Mission work provides opportunities for participants to put their faith into practice through first-hand experience serving as Christ did. “God has chosen not to leave our communities in spiritual disrepair. He has made plans for ordinary men and women to make disciples...” (Willis & Coe, 2014, p. 17). The Great Commission found in Matthew 28:19-20 was given to all Christians. However, it can be challenging for groups to plan and carry out these types of trips on their own without guidance. Developing a partnership with a community is one way to establish long-term commitment and relationships to make the process run more smoothly. This study sought to examine an established long-term partnership of this type to describe one instance of such a partnership. From this observation, it was assumed that some key suggestions would emerge that may assist others who are seeking to build such partnerships. Howell (2009) posits that activities should be planned in the spirit of *Missio Dei* and encourage relationship building.

Within a cross-sector type of mission partnership, there are many stakeholders involved who are impacted by the work done. By examining multiple perspectives of how the partnership functions and the benefits or struggles that exist, suggestions were developed as potential guidelines to assist others from the start. World Changers has established partnerships in multiple cities, but each has its own individual characteristics that have been fine-tuned over the years. These suggestions for best practices can potentially be adapted based on the groups and locations involved to provide greater chance of successful partnerships being formed.

## **Summary of the Design**

This section will summarize the study design. It includes information about the research population, the research sample and sampling technique, and the methodological design of the study.

### **Research Population**

The participants for this research study were recruited from individuals who are familiar with the partnership between WC and the city of Chattanooga. Those invited to participate were members of three groups: 1) Community members such as government officials and other leaders, people involved with local organizations, and homeowners who may have received services through the project, 2) Ministry leaders, both those who have brought students to the project as well as those working in local churches, and 3) Staff and leadership of WC both at the national level and those associated with the local project as coordinators.

### **Research Sample and Sampling Technique**

Contact with WC leadership was used initially for locating community and ministry leaders from the area being studied, to invite participation from individuals working as coordinators or staff for WC, and to gather contact information for ministry leaders who have brought students to the area for mission service opportunity. Online resources were utilized to locate contact information for government and local organization leadership. With the focus of this research being long-term partnerships, it was helpful that the sample included individuals from different time periods during the partnership's duration.

### **Methodological Design**

Research was conducted in Chattanooga, Tennessee. This site was chosen due to the length of time the partnership has existed. WC has been coordinating short-term mission projects

for students in the city since 2004 (World Changers, 2023). After initial contact, those agreeing to participate were provided with a link to an open-ended questionnaire to complete online using the SurveyMonkey website. The questionnaire (see Appendix C) was designed to gather input about personal experiences with the mission activities as well as perceptions of impact on the community and the management practices associated with the partnership's presence. At the end, a link to another short survey was included for participants to provide contact information if they were willing to conduct a personal interview with the researcher.

Personal interviews were later conducted in person and using video conferencing, with audio recording utilized. The researcher traveled to Chattanooga during World Changers week in July of 2022 for first-hand observation as well as the opportunity to ride-along with a local coordinator to job sites. Relevant documents and other materials such as newspaper articles that were available were examined and notes taken as well.

After data collection, the responses, interviews, and notes were analyzed through coding to determine if similarities and differences existed. The MAXQDA program was used to assist in this process. As the data was compiled, it demonstrated benefits as well as areas of concern. Using this information, the researcher was able to develop a set of recommendations for potential helps and hindrances when beginning a partnership such as what exists between WC and Chattanooga.

### **Chapter Summary**

The concepts of legitimate peripheral participation and working within a covenant community through cross-sector social partnerships served as the catalyst for this study. By examining a long-term partnership between a faith-based organization and a specific community, this researcher was able to develop recommendations for practices that may improve the odds of

success of such an endeavor as well as ascertain potential pitfalls of which partner organizations should be made aware. While every individual partnership of this nature will have unique circumstances, this researcher offers suggestions to improve the chance of successfully achieving the desired results. By using the case study methodology, this researcher was able to thoroughly study one such ongoing partnership and gather data from different perspectives related to the various partner stakeholders.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

### Overview

The concept of creating partnerships to accomplish tasks is not novel. Throughout the early church time period, it allowed growing congregations to combine resources and make a greater impact on sharing the Bible and its message of salvation (Acts 2:42-47; Rom. 5:26; 1 Cor. 16:1-4; 2 Cor. 8:1-15). In modern times, the use of cross-sector partnerships between organizations helps to meet needs that cannot be accomplished singularly. This chapter will describe relevant literature related to the theological and theoretical frameworks of this research.

The first section of the chapter will examine the theological framework for creating partnerships to address areas of need. The basis for this area of study is the idea of covenant communities as described by Lingenfelter (2008). It will begin with the concept of loving one's neighbor, which includes everyone and not just those in physical proximity. Both the Old and New Testaments instruct to love others and help those in need. Following that will be discussion about the Great Commission proclaimed by Jesus in Matthew 28:18-20. The church's role in fulfilling this Great Commission will be described as the church is called to be one body united in purpose while still consisting of individuals with many different characteristics and roles. The central Bible passages related to the topic of one body of diverse members are found in 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 2, and Revelation 7. The final part of the theological framework will examine partnerships through the examples of Paul as he instructed the early church groups.

The second section will consider the theoretical aspects of partnerships beginning with cross-sector social oriented partnerships as described by Selsky and Parker (2005, 2010). Areas of discussion will include the importance and distribution of resources as well as the need for a spirit of mutuality to balance power. The different arenas in which such partnerships form, how

power structures and relationships are determined, the possible designs, and the decision-making and evaluation processes will be discussed. Following this, the text will provide a brief history of faith-based organizations and what FBOs have to offer to cross-sector partnerships. A discussion of service learning will complete this section. The text will consider service learning in the context of growth and development, with subtopics of experiencing diversity, spiritual development, and leadership experience.

The third section will consider other related literature, specifically types of partnerships. This section will begin by examining academic-community partnerships with consideration given to medical partnerships. Examples of CSSPs will follow, describing situations that have been faced by previous partnerships. The section will continue with a discussion of the importance of cultural intelligence and sensitivity when participating in a relationship that involves other groups. Sub-topics will include ethnocentrism, bounded-set thinking, how money makes a difference, category width, communication, and the need to develop greater cultural intelligence. The final part of the section will consider short-term mission experiences.

The chapter will conclude with a discussion of the rationale for the study. The text will identify that a gap in the literature exists that the current research seeks to fill.

### **Theological Framework for the Study**

The field of missions encompasses a vast array of organizations, ministry opportunities, and participants. The undertaking of short-term mission experiences, defined as fourteen days or less spent on a specific project or in a specific location, is utilized by many churches to allow their members to go outside the walls of the church building and put their faith into practice (Ballew, 2017; Hancock, 2014; Howell, 2009; Wilder, 2004). Utilizing this type of hands-on method is not a new concept. The field of education has seen it presented for instructional

purposes since it was espoused by John Dewey, who suggested it could help deepen and enhance understanding (Anthony & Benson, 2011). Jesus also used this method while training his disciples (Csinos, 2010).

The biblical and theological considerations for participation in these types of ministry experiences will be discussed in the pages that follow. The first area of discussion will consider how, throughout the Bible, people are instructed to love their neighbor and help those in need. Following that, the review will consider the Great Commission of Jesus found in Matthew 28:18-20 and how it relates to Isaiah 40:3-5 and Matthew 3:2.

The Bible is specific in relating that the members of God's kingdom are one body and need one another to function and grow (Prov. 27:17; Rom. 12:4-5; Eph. 4:16; Heb. 10:24-25). In order for people to work together and successfully minister, it is necessary to maintain unity among those involved. Paul's missionary work in the book of Acts provides examples of relationships that help or hinder the mission work depending on how well people were able to work together (van Engen, 2019). The Bible establishes the church as the Body of Christ which has many parts that work together (1 Corinthians 12). This section will discuss the biblical metaphor of body as well as diversity (Ephesians 2) and what is to come when Christ returns (Revelation 7). The final portion of this section will consider Paul's instructions to the early church groups. Included will be the themes of *koinonia*, humility, and the Fruit of the Spirit. These characteristics of living like Christ play an integral role in showing God's love to a world in need. Mission partnerships can offer not only the resources but the experience of being able to live like Christ.

## **The Great Commandment: Love Thy Neighbor**

Often when discussing helping others, the term neighbor is used. For many, this implies those who live nearby. However, one's neighbor is not just those in close proximity. There is a necessity to remove barriers such as ethnic boundaries (Noble, 2013). The term neighbor encompasses those with whom one has contact in the various domains of life. However, the term also applies to those who may not be physically nearby. For Christians, the world is filled with others who are to be considered neighbors. Logan (2019) suggests that our Christian witness needs to incorporate work in our local society but also around the world.

Throughout the Bible, instruction to believers teaches to love their neighbors. Beginning with the Ten Commandments given to Moses (Exod. 20:3-17; Deut. 5:7-21), the people of God are provided a set of governing principles that represent God's desires. Leviticus 19:18 states "Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the Lord." In the New Testament, this idea continues through the teachings of Christ. The Gospels replicate the command to love they neighbor (Matt. 19:19; Mark 12:30; Luke 10:27).

Other Bible passages promote the concept of loving and helping one another. In Galatians 6, Paul reminds the early church to carry one another's burdens and do good to all. The church at Corinth is instructed to seek the good of others (1 Cor. 10:24). Zechariah 7:9-10 directs that God's people should show mercy and compassion, while Ecclesiastes 4:10 instructs to help up others who have fallen. The Golden Rule of doing to others as one would have it done to oneself stems from this mindset of ministering and serving one's neighbors. This directive is represented in all major religions and presented in Matthew 7:12 (Heineck, 2015).

The parable of the Good Samaritan found in Luke 10 expresses the need to minister to others no matter who they are or from where they come (Shen et al., 2013). This story offers an example of how prejudice can interfere with willingness to reach out to others. Individuals may develop mindsets about others based on the groups to which they belong or are representing, thus hindering the ability to openly and willingly love all of one's neighbors as the Bible instructs (Hoover, 2006). James 2:8 reinforces the idea of loving everyone while 1 Peter 3:8 tells believers to be compassionate. This becomes a new commandment, as stated in John 13:34, that Christians are to love one another. It does not indicate exceptions about whom is to receive that love.

### **The Great Commission: Go and Tell**

In Matthew 28, Jesus issues some of His final instructions to his disciples before His crucifixion. This passage contains what has become known as the "Great Commission" where the disciples are commanded to take the Gospel message to every part of the earth. The same message is repeated in Mark 16:15, John 20:21, and Acts 1:8.

It is important to remember that Jesus did not instruct people to only minister to those who were similar to themselves. "Our going or living as sent people is not limited to reaching people just like us. Jesus sends us out cross culturally and internationally" (Borthwick, 2015, p. 41). In order to reach more people from different backgrounds with the Gospel, believers must work together and learn from one another. The church's willingness to present a unified body that reaches out in mission presents Jesus Christ to the world. Developing unity among those serving in Jesus' name is accomplished through love, healing, inclusion, proclamation, and reconciliation (Sunquist, 2013). Without unity among the believers and members of ministry partnerships, it becomes more difficult to meet needs and minister to the world.

The evangelistic message of Christ's love and salvation can be communicated through service when it is explained as living like Christ (Sunquist, 2013). Weaver (2016) notes how as far back as the late nineteenth century, the Holy Spirit's presence in believers was viewed as the foundation for a connection between service and holiness. When believers choose to demonstrate Christ in their own lives, one way it can be manifested is by caring for others (Borthwick, 2015). There may be a need to change location, tools, or the calendar, but these contribute to the impact (Sunquist, 2013). Even in times of fear, challenge, and disappointment, the Bible reminds that Jesus remains constant and is present in believers' lives after they experience the Holy Spirit mentioned above (Borthwick, 2015).

It is important to be unified as the body of Christ regardless of individual differences. This is the way to accomplish the *Missio Dei* work that God expects. Ministry partners should look around to see what groups of people God has brought into their environment (such as immigrants or students) and determine what the greatest needs are (Sunquist, 2013). Working together in partnership, they can then develop plans to best utilize one another's resources to meet those needs. Showing love to those outside one's own immediate people group is a way to share God's message to the world and fulfill Jesus' Great Commission. "When people see how Christians treat others and how they love one another, the world learns about the kingdom of God" (Sunquist, 2013, p. 287). By becoming a physical representation of Christ's love, believers choose a relationship with God that flows outward (Borthwick, 2015). Sunquist (2013) states that when evangelistic witness is exemplified, it allows the good news of God's love to be demonstrated. This may require doing different things in order to impact a variety of people. However, Christ modeled this by using different methods to reach different types of people. Willis and Coe (2014) suggest that "living life on mission should be driven not out of guilty

obligation, but rather out of embracing the identity and purpose given to us in Christ” (p. 28).

Following the example of Christ teaching His disciples to work together in unity as mission partners facilitates obstacles being overcome, and the Great Commission can be fulfilled.

### **The Relationship Between the Great Commandment and the Great Commission**

The prophet Isaiah proclaimed that the people of God are to prepare the way of the Lord (Isa. 40:3-5). In order for God’s Kingdom to be fulfilled, it is necessary for repentance to occur (Matt. 3:2) as people turn to Him and become the Children of God. Matthew 25 notes that there will be a time when the sheep and goats will be separated. Those who have offered aid to the less fortunate will receive the reward of fellowship with God. This fits with the premise of the Great Commandment to love one another discussed earlier. Even in professions where religion is not necessarily at the forefront, Christians have the opportunity to fulfill the Great Commandment by their actions and service. This, in turn, may present opportunities to carry out the Great Commission and share the message of Christ’s redemption (Gokani & Caragata, 2020). God’s plan is designed to use the ordinary people who believe to bless the world around them (Willis & Coe, 2014). According to Kang (2011), these pillars of the Christian faith “function as ways through which God’s people are invited to authenticate their identity (Christian formation) and calling (kingdom engagement) as an embodiment of the very ministry of the triune God in the world” (p. 117). Willis and Coe (2014) suggest asking oneself five questions related to the mission to which God calls believers (see Table 1). Christians can consider their answers and then seek to live life on mission and share the Gospel message to the world around them.

**Table 1***Questions to Ask Oneself About Mission Work*

	Willis & Coe Question	Relevance to Christians
1	Why does mission work even matter?	Determine the reasons for what makes the mission work important. Is there a biblical basis for doing it?
2	What is foundational to my growth and development?	Reflect on what is most relevant to individual growth, especially spiritually. How can one encourage deeper and greater development?
3	How do I apply the mission God has given me?	Relate the current mission work to the call that God has given Christians to share His love and message of hope. How do the Great Commission and Commandment relate?
4	To whom is God calling me?	Determine to whom one will minister. Will the mission work reach those nearby or will travel be necessary? Will it serve those of a certain age, gender, ethnicity, or cultural group?
5	What do the next steps look like for me?	Plan for how to proceed, not only for doing the actual mission work, but also for what comes afterward. What supplies, training, planning, etc. is involved to carry out the mission work? Once this project is complete, what will the individual seek to do next?

Note. Questions found in Willis & Coe (2014, p. 30).

Christians can consider their answers and then seek to live life on mission and share the Gospel message to the world around them.

### **The Church as an Instrument to Complete the Great Commission**

In order to complete the Great Commission, the church needs to work together to act as the instrument that will reach the ends of the earth. This section will examine how Paul teaches in 1 Corinthians 12 that the church is a body of believers who work together to accomplish this. It will also consider the idea of how people bring their own backgrounds and gifts to the larger body. These differences should be recognized as forming a more complete whole. The section will conclude with a discussion of Revelation 7 and the description of the complete body of believers in Heaven. Individual differences will not matter as the larger group comes together to worship God with no one being excluded if they have accepted Christ.

## ***1 Corinthians 12***

In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul spends several verses, especially 19-26, describing how the church is one body of believers and each member has functions that benefit the rest. According to van der Water (2016), the “New Testament draws its foundational understanding of cooperation and collaboration within the community of faith from St. Paul’s teaching of the church as the body of Christ” (p. 51). Partnerships require time and energy from all parties as well as taking time to acknowledge these multiple pieces and how each needs the other(s) to get the work done (van Engen, 2001). Within an individual church or mission organization, there will be people of varying strengths and abilities. Paul reminds that each person has a role to contribute, and the whole will be stronger and more capable of success than anyone could be alone.

It is important to consider that God’s message of salvation, the *Missio Dei*, is for everyone, and believers are the tools to help reach the world (van Engen, 2001; Willis & Coe, 2014). Ephesians 4:4 reiterates Paul’s message: “There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling.” It is much easier for work to be accomplished when resources are combined. Often, what one participant lacks, the other can fill. This is true of the human body which is the image that Paul suggests in his letters. When one loses sight, for example, the other senses such as hearing and smell often compensate by becoming stronger. In the case of mission partnerships, this visualization of a body as many parts needing one another emphasizes the importance of interdependence and how it should characterize church relationships locally and globally (van der Water, 2016). Partnerships allow those involved to learn from one another, help one another, and make one another better by compensating for inabilities or inadequacies (van der Water, 2016).

### *A Diverse Community*

As the world continues to change, it is necessary for Christian groups to understand and accept the need to work together as one body for God's mission to spread His love (van Engen, 2001). Often, there is a tendency to gravitate toward partnerships with those who share the same spiritual emphases, traditions, or practices. However, because the world is rapidly changing and cultures are overlapping, ministry groups need to see one another as co-workers in sharing God's message. Ephesians 2 reminds believers that at one time, they were all non-believers themselves and separated from Christ. However, once becoming part of the body of Christ, Ephesians 2:19 states that people "are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God." The Bible does not state that only those from certain locations or members of certain cultures may join God's household. The body of Christian believers is made up of people from diverse places with a variety of cultural backgrounds. As such, people bring differing sets of skills, spiritual gifts, and ideas of how to share God's love which is part of what allows members to help each other and fill one another's voids.

No single group can accomplish the task of evangelizing the entire world alone (van Engen, 2001). Rather, by working together and learning from one another, different parts of the Body of Christ can come together to celebrate their diversity, share decision-making, exchange information, and develop a common vision to reach the lost (van der Water, 2016). "When Christians and churches begin to lose their global mission commitment and involvement, they are on a path to becoming only shades of themselves; they are no longer fully the church that Jesus Christ intends them to be" (van Engen, 2001, p. 18). Focusing on the image of believers as one body that Paul describes in 1 Corinthians 12 is necessary to encourage and develop mission

partnerships that prevent this from occurring. Biblical community is instructed to work together to offer a clear picture of God as Father to the world (Willis & Coe, 2014).

### ***Revelation 7***

The book of Revelation provides insight into the end times and how God's kingdom of Heaven will appear. Revelation 7:9 says that there will be "a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues" all before God's throne praising Him together. There is no mention of exclusion based on any characteristic. For mission partnerships and outreach, this is important to remember. God does not discriminate, and when His kingdom is established, all will be included. In order for this to come to fruition, it is necessary for His message of love and redemption to reach all people on the earth. Christians are called to be the ministers and help deliver this gift of salvation to restore everyone to Him (Kelly, 1986).

As ministry partnerships develop, having the opportunity to work with those who are different from one's usual group helps individuals learn to relate to and accept people from other places or cultural backgrounds. Cultures often subscribe to varying norms for behavior, tradition, and expression. It is also important to consider that different cultures experience the Holy Spirit in different ways. However, they all still experience the same Spirit (Flett, 2020). Those who go to new places as missionaries demonstrate this as they learn the best ways to share Christ by building relationships with the people who live there. By partnering with an organization that has more knowledge of a particular culture, it is possible to learn and understand those differences so that outreach is possible without offending those to whom one is ministering. Celebrating diversity is important because the fellowship of Christians is meant to include everyone (Noble,

2013) as Galatians 3:28 reminds when Paul says there is neither Jew nor Greek. All believers are children of God regardless of where they begin, what they look like, or where they live now.

Hatch (2019) suggests that each church functions as a complete body within itself, but alone they cannot be the whole church of God's body. To fully become part of the Body of Christ, it is necessary to be in relation with others. Within each local body, there is a call to expand beyond the comfortable and familiar to reach people beyond the immediate congregation, thus adding to the body. Since everyone has their own gifts from God, they need one another to do the work of sharing the Gospel. This might entail working with people with whom one would not normally spend time.

“The multi-ethnic congregation demonstrates the power of God's love” by showing that this love can overcome barriers and boundaries that mankind has designed to separate (Noble, 2013, p. 2). As Revelation 7 relates, when God's kingdom is fully realized, there will be no manmade divisions. All will be together participating in the worship of one God. Society has taught people to divide themselves by traits such as skin color, financial status, and heritage. However, the Bible reminds believers that in God's kingdom, that will not matter since everyone will be together as one body worshipping God. It would seem reasonable that partnering together on earth to reach the world with His message is what God desires of Christian groups.

### **Paul's Call to Partnerships**

The New Testament contains many letters written by Paul to the early church congregations. He offered advice and instructions to give guidance for how to continue growing and to build or maintain relationships among believers. This section will discuss some of Paul's suggestions including connections between churches, *koinonia*, humility, and the Fruit of the Spirit.

### *Connections Between Churches*

Paul's epistles to the early churches offer several examples of the importance of developing partnerships in areas of ministry. In 1 Corinthians 16, he is attempting to encourage multiple congregations to partner together in collecting an offering to send to the church in Jerusalem. Developing a network of these early churches would allow them to pool their resources to help one another and reciprocate assistance that had been provided (Sweeney, 2019). Philippians is a letter encouraging the church to continue to partner with his ministry and mission. Paul does not force this relationship but seeks to reinforce the fellowship they share in Christ which will lead to a voluntary sharing of resources (Jennings, 2018).

Paul continues his theme of mutual benefits in 2 Corinthians 9 when he recognizes how the parties involved can motivate one another as well as offer mutual exchanges of necessities such as prayer and money (Sweeney, 2019). Ministry partnerships can take many forms: church/church, mission/mission, sending mission/receiving church, sending church/receiving mission, teams/mission agencies, or even global cooperative endeavors (van Engen, 2001). One of the difficulties faced today, which was also a problem for the early churches, is the separation of groups by location or denomination. However, it is important, just as Paul instructed in his letters, to find a "shared sense of mission, a conscious and deliberate partnership, a relational connection, and ungrudging mutual benefaction" (Sweeney, 2019, p. 150).

Philippians 1:27-30 suggests a theme of unity and the church partnering with Paul to support and proclaim the Gospel message (Jennings, 2018). During a meeting of the World Council of Churches in El Escorial, Spain, the group established guidelines for ecumenical sharing of resources. These include being equal partners, having mutual trust, affirmation, accountability, considering a global value system, allowing all groups regardless of

circumstances to participate, and promoting this idea of sharing at all levels of the church organization (van der Water, 2016). These standards fit with Paul's concept of a unified ministry partnership. It is also important to note that in his letter to the Philippians, he specifically mentions Eudodias and Syntyche and a need for them to "be of the same mind in the Lord" (Phil. 4:2). It is not only necessary for the members of the partnership to be united, but also for those who make up the individual pieces of the partnership to work in unity (Jennings, 2018).

### ***Koinonia***

The Greek word *koinonia* is often used to explain a mutual partnership focused on a particular ministry (Ogereau, 2012). According to van Engen (2001), "we are a global *koinonia*, the missionary fellowship of the disciples of Christ, commissioned to participate in Christ's mission to the whole world" (p. 23). In Paul's second letter to the church at Corinth, he addresses this mutual partnership with the church in Jerusalem. There exists a mutual interdependence between the two congregations, with the Jerusalem church providing spiritual instruction and guidance, and the Corinthian church reciprocating by providing funds (Sweeney, 2019).

A key part of a relationship built under the umbrella of *koinonia* is the presence of mutuality and reciprocity, to which Paul makes reference in Philippians. His relationship with the church at Philippi is voluntary, for a specific goal, involves people from different parts of society acting as equals, and has the potential to be ended if conflict arises (Jennings, 2018). Hatch (2019) suggests that participating in such partnerships by religious groups can lead to concern that their own traditions and distinctions may become diluted by the ecumenical nature of the partner organization. However, Ogereau (2012) sees these partnerships as a way to balance the needs of some with the extra resources that others have, thus creating an equality that is relative and proportional. The individuality of the participating groups can be maintained while

sharing with those who are different. According to Sunquist (2013), the early church community functioned as a family, sharing what they had in possessions, time, and fellowship.

Hatch (2019) states “*koinonia* is both a gift and a task” and implies receptivity (p. 187). This mutual generosity is a piece of God’s means for binding communities together regardless of distance and differences. As a result, forming such partnerships is pleasing to Him (Jennings, 2018). Each member has a set of responsibilities based on their own strengths and talents (Sweeney, 2019). A relationship of *koinonia* implies that these will complement one another, make up for what is lacking on either side, and build a stronger ministry all-around to carry out the mission of sharing God’s love.

### ***Humility***

Paul’s letter to the church at Philippi commends them for the work they have thus far accomplished but also reminds them to continue to persevere and maintain the commitment they have to one another. He highlights their accomplishments and how their unity brings him joy (Jennings, 2018). By comparing their work and attitudes to that of Christ Jesus, he encourages them to stay focused on one another and the love they share.

One of the key areas of focus in chapter 2 of Philippians is that of putting others before oneself. This will improve the unity of the church as well as the partnership they have with Paul to pursue his ministry. Paul suggests Christians should be willing to totally submit for the benefit of others, even if it results in humiliation, as he himself has demonstrated in his life and work (Jennings, 2018). Paul offers Jesus as the model of service and sacrifice, reinforcing the mindset that neither the church as a whole or its individual members should have the purpose of self-exaltation (Borthwick, 2015). In addition, he reminds that even in suffering, they are together, and that Christ also suffered (Jennings, 2018).

Harmelink (2003) focuses on the idea of *kenosis* or “self-emptying” as presented in Philippians 2:7. As a result of Christ pouring Himself out, the church should voluntarily respond by their own sacrifices in ministry (Harmelink, 2003). This can only be accomplished if the church is willing to step outside of its own walls. Because of the potential lack of experience, knowledge, or resources, building partnerships for ministry is essential.

Mission partnerships can aid in the globalization process of evangelism (as directed by the Great Commission mentioned previously) as well as assist in an exchange of culture (Hancock, 2014). Paul demonstrated his commitment to participating in this type of exchange by sending Timothy and Epaphroditus to Philippi. The partnership between him and the city which was exemplified by their laboring for one another contributed to blessings received by both parties (Jennings, 2018). Building a shared Christian identity with those who may be perceived as different due to cultural, economic, or social conditions is important (Hancock, 2014) and is a key part of going into the world as Jesus commanded. In order to develop the strongest partnerships, participants will need unity among themselves and with each other which can be achieved when Philippians 2 is considered. The call to put others before self will foster relationships and unity.

### ***The Fruit of the Spirit***

Presented in Galatians 5:22-23, the Fruit of the Spirit is a list of characteristics that are exemplified in the lives of believers as they develop and grow to be more like Christ. The first trait listed is love which is then demonstrated as the other eight are manifested. Lingenfelter, in his book *Leading Cross-Culturally: Covenant Relationships for Effective Christian Leadership* (2008), states “we cannot accomplish the work of the kingdom of God unless we are willing to work together in the fellowship of a loving community and forgive as he has forgiven us” (p.

18). Ministry partnerships offer opportunities for this to be put into practice and for this work to be accomplished. In John 15:9-10, Jesus reminds His disciples to love as He loved which is how God the Father loved Him. This love is so deep that one would be willing to lay down his or her own life for that of a friend (van der Water, 2016). Mission work done in this spirit of Christian love moves the ministry beyond the “fix-it” level (van Engen, 2019) to a more personal level of involvement between those serving and those to whom the ministry is directed.

Jesus gave the ultimate example of service and love of others above self (Borthwick, 2015). This love is demonstrated as the Fruit of the Spirit are presented through the actions and attitudes of believers. Paul instructs the church at Galatia that “the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance” (Gal. 5:22-23). By demonstrating these attributes in one’s life, the believer reflects Christ. “When we walk with Jesus, we consistently develop more and more of these characteristics (or fruit)” (Willis & Coe, 2014, p. 80). This is especially important when mission and ministry are undertaken. Working in a partnership to accomplish the same goals may require all invested parties to carefully consider how they can best manifest these attributes to better fulfill the ministry purpose.

Ledesma (2013) conducted an interview with L. Roo McKenzie who distinguished between religious and spiritual leaders when discussing spiritual leadership in schools. Religious leaders know the information about Christ and God’s kingdom but choose to rely on human effort rather than the Spirit. Spiritual leaders, however, focus on the relationship with Christ and living a life devoted to Him. Through this, the Fruit of the Spirit flows forth with less effort (Ledesma, 2013). Their commitment becomes an encouragement to others, which can be a valuable asset when working in ministry partnerships. When all parties maintain this reliance on

Christ and desire to show His love, they can motivate one another to persevere even in times of disappointment.

Paul reinforces the necessity of keeping the Fruit of the Spirit present in one's life in Ephesians 4. The Fruit of the Spirit can only be made real through interpersonal relationships (van Engen, 2001). Willis and Coe (2014) state, "a solitary faith is not a Christian faith" (p. 88). The list requires manifesting those characteristics toward others; it cannot exist in isolation. Partnerships allow the fruit to be more fully realized as those involved can assist if there are shortcomings in a particular area. As Christians continue to grow fully in the stature of Christ, they also grow together (van Engen, 2001). Galatians 6 continues Paul's use of the Fruit of the Spirit in his instructions about relationships with others. He offers insight to the church at Galatia about how they can put the fruit into practice in their lives and work for God (Fee, 1994).

The Fruit of the Spirit list is grouped into three parts: spiritual virtues (which include love, joy, and peace), social virtues (consisting of longsuffering, kindness, and goodness), and guides to conduct (encompassing faithfulness, meekness, and self-control) (Painter, 1973). These are not new ideas to the believers. They continue the concept of putting others before self and living a life of service as demonstrated in the life of Christ Jesus. Although He did not institute a new set of rules for His followers, Christ went to great lengths to teach them the importance of loving God above all else and loving their neighbors as themselves. (Loubser, 2009). As mentioned earlier in this chapter, one's neighbor does not simply imply the person next door. Neighbors are anyone with whom contact is made. Ministry opportunities may appear at any time. Within the constraints of partnership missions, neighbors may be those being served directly by the ministry or those with whom the partnership is formed. Participating in service opportunities offered by mission organizations through an ongoing partnership with a

community provides the experience of putting faith into practice and allowing the Fruit of the Spirit to be demonstrated in one's life.

### **Summary of Theological Framework**

Ministry partnerships for the purpose of mission service allow those involved to build on one another's strengths and share resources. This concept is not novel, as illustrated in this chapter throughout the early churches. Their relationships with one another as well as with Paul and his ministry companions allowed God's word to spread faster and wider than it would have if each church had acted singularly. Jesus' Great Commission, found in Matthew 28 and other New Testament passages, provides the incentive and motivation to go into the world to serve. By fulfilling the Great Commandment to love one's neighbor found in many passages of Scripture, doors can be opened to carry out the Great Commission more effectively.

The Bible offers many reasons for developing mission partnerships and carrying out the work of spreading the Gospel message. The image of the church as the body of Christ, each part relying on the others to be complete, presents a strong argument for parties to join together. While individual churches represent a body among themselves, they also are part of the larger body. Together, they are stronger when they can merge resources, labor forces, and talent while learning from one another. Paul's letters to the early churches also provide many examples of strength in numbers. Combining their resources allowed Jesus' commands to be fulfilled as the message of God's love and redemption was more easily carried to different parts of the world.

Unity is a theme throughout the New Testament, and as mentioned previously, begins with the Holy Spirit. Paul's letters to the early church groups promote the bond of *koinonia* in which they partner together to accomplish the tasks set before them. Philippians 2 is written to the church at Philippi but reminds readers today that it is important to put others before oneself if

the desire is to live a life like Christ. Jesus offered the ultimate demonstration of that when He died for the sins of the world. This attitude and desire would make partnerships stronger if all parties involved are willing to do whatever it takes to help one another succeed in completing the task at hand.

Finally, all of the above concepts are tied together by believers presenting the Fruit of the Spirit in how they live their lives. These characteristics become more evident as a person strives to live like Christ Himself. By putting love toward others first, the rest of the list can be utilized as ways to demonstrate Christlike love that sacrifices self. Mission ministry necessitates having this mindset and choosing to manifest it. Ministry partnerships combine different people and groups, desiring to show Christ's love, and are made stronger when everyone involved is working to exemplify the Fruit of the Spirit in all that they do.

### **Theoretical Framework for the Study**

Research shows that collaborations and partnerships can achieve what organizations are unable to do on their own by offering resources, manpower, and leadership to one another (Brinkerhoff & Brinkerhoff, 2011; Clarke & Fuller, 2010; Hartman & Dhanda, 2018; Hesse et al., 2019). Wyrwa (2018) defines collaboration as “cooperation involving the implementation of common or convergent objectives, in particular with respect to coordination of implemented projects and functions established as part of the division of labor” (p. 119). Involving multiple stakeholders provides collective understanding, encourages more innovative and integrated solutions, and assists in garnering support from others (MacDonald et al., 2019). Griffin (2016) suggests that one of the most important pieces to these types of partnerships is being able to build relationships with the others involved as well as learning about the people who make up the other organizations. Selsky and Parker (2005) describe these relationships as cross-sector social

partnerships (CSSPs) due to the involvement of groups from different sectors of society.

Building long-term partnerships allows those involved to continue to evaluate needs, consider resources to be shared, and work toward common goals. Many faith-based organizations serve as members of such partnerships. Their presence in communities often gives them an advantage. Serving also helps in the fulfillment of the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20) as they share Christ's love through service. Faith-based organizations can utilize service-learning as a means for participants in projects to put faith into action. By developing long-term partnerships with communities, these projects become a testament of commitment and not just a way to offer a quick fix to problems.

### **Community Development**

In a 2016 article, van der Water quotes an organization from the Global South (a World Bank designation for developing countries) speaking of a partnership as “a collaborative effort between two or more parties sharing a similar vision, aimed at reaching a common goal” that also “entails the pooling and sharing of skills and resources, as well as risks and benefits, thus enabling such partnerships to accomplish goals beyond the capability of the individual parties” (p. 48). For objectives to be achieved and work to be accomplished, however, it is beneficial to ensure that there is collaboration among the groups involved (Morrissey, 2013). Having a partnership built on cooperation and collaboration can ease financial burdens and offer more resources than one group can provide alone (Cohen, 2018). Schmid and Almog-Bar (2020) found that the most likely motives promoting collaboration were wanting to serve clients better, ideological motives, being willing to work with those in positions to make decisions or policies, and encouraging use of resources. Outcomes that directly impact the partner groups may vary but could include benefits that are specific to the project and immediately visible to those involved,

organizational benefits that result from the collaboration process, or social transformations within the organization, community, or greater environment (Yin & Jamali, 2021).

One very practical challenge facing organizations and governments seeking to do the work of community development is the sheer need of some communities. For governments to address the gaps in human services, they must determine how to gather and maintain cross-sector support in ways that are appropriate and effective (Dunkenberger et al., 2019). In an effort to address this challenge, Selsky and Parker (2005) have suggested that cross-sector or social-oriented partnerships must be developed and fostered from different sectors of society such as government, religious, business, and social services. These partnerships can make better use of the resources possessed by each separate entity. They are often created to address social issues but can also be formed for economic, academic, or political reasons. Partnerships between sectors offer the potential to impact transformations in a more integrated way (Horan, 2019; Wyrwa, 2018). By working together, resource usage can be maximized, whether in tangible products, manual workforce, or leadership expertise. Clarke and Fuller (2010) suggest this cooperation is a great benefit when the goals exceed a single group's capacity for successful achievement. However, Yin and Jamali (2021) also note that viewing goals as cooperative rather than competitive will make a difference in how the partnership and project evolves.

Faith-based organizations have become important partners in addressing these resource needs (Heineck, 2015; Joshi, 2010; Lipsky, 2011). In working together to serve, participants also fulfill the larger goal of acting as the body of Christ (as discussed previously) and have opportunity to visualize their place in that body. Since many faith-based organizations already have a presence in communities, it benefits building relationships and gaining the trust of other stakeholders. Relevant to this researcher's work are also the concepts of service-learning and

transformational learning experiences that come from participation in mission projects.

Transformational learning, as James et al. (2015) describe it, can occur as participants grow and develop through their work. Serving as members of the partnership to achieve its ultimate goals can help in spiritual development and prepare participants to demonstrate Christ's love as they go into the larger world (Kitchen, 2014). It can sometimes be challenging for Christian leaders to find service opportunities to meet the needs of pushing young people out of their comfort zones. These experiences and the work done by faith-based organizations through partnerships with communities allows Christians to fulfill the Great Commission and share God throughout the world (Matt. 28:18-20).

### **Cross-Sector Social-Oriented Partnerships**

Selsky and Parker (2005) have suggested that cross-sector or social-oriented partnerships must be developed and fostered to address the challenge of meeting the extreme need in some communities. The authors note that these partnerships are then able to maximize use of the resources possessed by each separate entity. According to Selsky and Parker (2005), traditional solutions are unable to meet some challenges, and these can be improved by utilizing lessons and resources from organizations that operate in other sectors. By working together, resource usage can be maximized, whether in tangible products, manual workforce, or leadership expertise. Since local governments have the ability to interact with many facets, this creates opportunities for initiation and coordination of cross-sector partnerships that offer other solutions to societal concerns (Hesse et al., 2019).

Selsky and Parker (2005) used the term cross-sector social-oriented partnerships or CSSPs to describe partnerships between organizations from different sectors in society such as government, business, for-profit, and non-profit. They define this partner relationship as an

“organization that partners to address short- or long-term projects that one or all partners propose, especially amid resource constraint” (p. 2). These relationships are formed to address issues that are better able to be solved by combining resources. According to Brinkerhoff and Brinkerhoff (2011), there exists a mutual dedication to an end goal. This mutuality and mutual dependence are necessary and should result in all invested parties being committed to the goals established by the partnership. There is an assumption that the synergy effects that come from pooling resources benefits cross-sector organizations while allowing them to address issues they could not solve alone (Joniškienė et al., 2020).

Rosko (2017) suggests that one of the goals to which CSSPs aspire is addressing problems that would be too complex to be solved by a single organization. If the issue is too big for one group alone, joint action involving multiple sectors may provide a better solution (Louche et al., 2021; MacDonald et al., 2019; Shumate et al., 2018). Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) often have strong community relationships that provide insight into issues and may have more flexibility in how to meet needs that the government may not have (Lipsky, 2011). This is important to prevent what van Engen (2019) calls “invasion syndrome” where decisions are made about what people need and how to address that need without consulting those who will receive the services (p. 66). Partnerships involving NGOs are often formed to address social concerns. The partnership members need one another to share resources and the risks of tackling those issues and concerns (Rosko, 2017). Long-term CSSPs have the benefit of being able to expand their original goal(s) as the partnership matures, and those involved are able to broaden their focus (Hesse et al., 2019). Shumate et al. (2018) suggest that partnership organizations can utilize adaptive capability to adjust to changes in the environment and operational capacity to adapt procedures and goals as assessment takes place over time.

Successful long-term partnerships require that all involved organizations understand how much time is needed to address goals and achieve the desired results (Horan, 2019).

Partnerships that rely on more than one organization are also known as cross-sector partnerships (CSPs) since they involve various sectors such as government, business, or civic concerns (van Hille et al., 2020). Other studies use terms such as Global Health Academic Partnerships (Citrin et al., 2017), public-private partnerships (Besley & Ghatak, 2017; Shin & Shin, 2016; Stadtler, 2016), or community-based participatory research (Youn et al., 2019). Often one partner is able to offer a better assessment of unmet needs due to seeing situations with a different lens and different prior experiences (Dang et al., 2017).

### ***Resources Matter***

A key reason for the joining of organizations in partnerships is the availability of a collective set of resources which can be utilized to address the determined issues at hand. Potential resources that may be contributed include finances, expertise and competencies, manpower, social capital, community relationships and knowledge, physical assets, reputation or brand recognition, technology, and in-kind donations (Dong & Rim, 2022; Joniškienė et al., 2020; Sanders, 2016). According to Austin and Seitanidi (2012), there are four potential areas of value that can be gained through partner interactions: associational, transferred, interaction, and synergistic. Combining resources and competencies of organizations serves as a key factor when trying to solve larger issues that cannot be addressed by a single group (Dunkenberger et al., 2019; Joniškienė et al., 2020; Shumate et al., 2018). In many cases, the genesis and benefit of such partnerships is access to resources that one group may lack or have difficulty acquiring which are held by another group (Brinkerhoff, 2002; Dong & Rim, 2022; McDonald et al., 2013; Weng et al., 2015; Wyrwa, 2018). Just as demonstrated previously in the efforts of Paul to

connect the early church bodies to work together, forming partnerships allows all invested parties to maximize efficiency and effectiveness by combining resources and dividing labor (Brinkerhoff & Brinkerhoff, 2011; McQuaid, 2009; Shumate et al., 2018; Wyrwa, 2018). MacDonald et al. (2019) uses the term partnership capacity to refer to the ability of the partnership to utilize one another's resources and adapt to the circumstances of the environment in which it is operating.

While CSSPs hold much possibility, there exists the potential for conflict because of the lack of access to key resources as well. Sanders (2016) offers an example of a situation in which the influence on the goals and objectives was disproportionate based on the partner who had the resource that was most central to the partnership goals. This also influenced how the roles and responsibilities of the partners were divided. Hesse et al. (2019) found that conflict is often triggered by disagreements about goals. Depending on how the resources are valued, the power dynamics of the partnership may vary. Property rights having priority value establishes that the partner with more has more power (Besley & Ghatak, 2017). Cultural hierarchies that place certain professions above others can lead to unequal power relationships (Citrin et al., 2017). Misunderstandings or disagreements over who provides which resources or conflict about financial or social motivations can also create imbalances (Hartman & Dhanda, 2018). This necessitates establishing balance in the power structure of the partnership since the key advantages to combining resources are that it is difficult to meet needs in isolation, often additional resources or perspectives are vital to solving greater problems, and there is more power in a group than alone (Brinkerhoff, 2002; McQuaid, 2009). Developing a resource-based view can be beneficial to balancing the interests of partnerships groups by aiding in understanding how the value creation process is undertaken based on those available resources

(Le Ber & Branzei, 2010). Nonprofits may benefit from a partnership by obtaining access to resources, by gaining experience from contact with other management systems, or by acquiring new knowledge from the others involved (Shumate et al., 2018). It has also been found that when there is shared vision and constant evaluation to realign goals, partners become better at creatively using the available resources (Yin & Jamali, 2021).

### ***Mutuality Based Partnerships***

As partnerships develop, it is important that there is effort to bring all sides together. This can be accomplished when there exists mutuality of goals, work expectations, positive attitudes toward one another, and perceived benefits (Sanders, 2016). Mutuality describes the need for mutual dependence and reciprocity among partners. This can be complicated as each organization “brings its own institutional complexity” to the partnership (Hesse et al., 2019, p. 679). This is especially true when working with government agencies that are bureaucratic in nature and must follow stricter procedures that often require more time to complete (Schmid & Almog-Bar, 2020). There should be an attempt to maximize benefits to all parties, regardless of the particular sector from which they derive (Brinkerhoff, 2002). When asymmetry exists in the balance of power, it is vital that the partners are able to develop a feeling of participation and commitment (Yin & Jamali, 2021). In order to achieve this, several features should be present, as offered by Brinkerhoff and Brinkerhoff (2011): “Jointly determined goals, collaborative and consensus-based decision making, non-hierarchical and horizontal structures and processes, synergistic interactions among partners, and shared accountability for outcomes and results” (p. 4).

Clarke and Jennings (2008) suggest that in a partnership, it is required that each group involved is seen as equals who are working toward common goals and objectives. A study about

a wellness partnership between an academic institution and a Hawaiian community (Chung-Do et al., 2019) demonstrated that including members of all relevant partner groups in a time of discussion helped build relationships and determine priorities and how to best address those areas. Loh et al. (2016) examined the Coalicion de Salud Comunitaria (COSACO) partnership in the Dominican Republic and found that previous work by other groups had led to negative perceptions by the local community. These had to be overcome, and the new partnership sought to build trust and improve relationships by engaging local groups as stakeholders. Vinciguerra (2014) discovered the same types of issues faced by a partnership between local communities in Haiti and St. Thomas University. Offering the local community some control over what the focal projects were helped build a solid relationship that was able to achieve long-term impact. Since community benefits can be a product of partnerships working, it is vital the community members feel included in the decision-making process (Nguyen et al., 2021).

Within the area of mutuality, there exist different levels of partnerships which help to determine the interdependence of the organizations. Selsky and Parker (2010) designate three platforms or approaches that guide how partnerships are developed. These are 1) resource-dependence, 2) social-issue, and 3) societal-sector. Resource dependent partnerships focus on meeting the needs of the partner organizations themselves by using the resources each partner has. This might involve areas such as manpower or leadership expertise. Social-issue partnerships seek to address external needs of the organizations themselves. These needs may be relationships with the public, combining resources to achieve a project, or business activities such as public relations. The third area, societal-sector partnerships, address needs within society at large by combining the resources of the partnership groups. Examples might include areas such as healthcare, education, welfare, or poverty.

**Partnership Arenas.** Research literature also describes four arenas for projects that create unique organizational considerations such as leadership roles and decision-making processes (Selsky & Parker, 2005; Shin & Shin, 2016). *Arena 1* designates partnerships between non-profit organizations and businesses. In these situations, often the business partner assists in providing funding for projects. Money can be a powerful component to achieving successful outcomes, so having a financial backer can be important. Businesses may also offer manpower through volunteer programs, aiding the non-profit group in completing work that may not be possible otherwise.

*Arena 2* partnerships develop between governments and businesses. At times, businesses have access to the resources that the government needs. This may be the case with military contractors who help supply products required to complete the missions of the armed forces. The business benefits through guaranteed work opportunities while the government is provided necessary materials or expertise.

*Arena 3* partnerships form between governments and non-profit organizations. These are often used to help address social issue concerns. The non-profit may provide manpower and a community presence that assists the government in addressing the needs of the community. This can be cost-effective for the government since the non-profit shoulders some of the financial burden. Having the government as a partner may also allow the non-profit organization access to funding and resources through programs such as grants.

*Arena 4* refers to tri-sector partnerships involving all three entities. These are the most complex due to the logistics of organizing multiple sets of resources. Leadership from all groups involved need to work together to determine how to contribute and distribute resources. There

will also be a need for greater checks and balances to ensure the agreed-upon goals are met in the best way possible (Selsky & Parker, 2005; Shin & Shin, 2016).

**Partnership Power Structures.** It is possible that a hierarchy of resources forms to determine what each group will contribute. Within such a setting, there is the potential for power struggles to emerge (Clarke and Jennings, 2008). The availability of resources can impact the balance (or imbalance) of the power structure and influence level. Sanders (2016) described these types of partnerships as dependent, funder/grantee, and non-needed/independent, which illustrate how power and resources can impact the role of each party.

Dependent partnerships exist when power is shared 50/50. The partnership is collaborative and acts as a coalition. There is high interdependence due to each organization relying on the full support of the other partner(s) to accomplish goals.

Funder/Grantee Partnerships occur when one partner drives the agenda due to possessing the most important resource required to complete the objective(s). Since they have the most valuable assets, they also wield the most influence. The preferences of the dominant partner will take precedence.

Non-Needed/Independent Partnerships happen when one partner already has everything needed to accomplish the goal(s). It is necessary to find a role for the other organization(s), though, because they are also part of the partnership. Since the group with the resources doesn't actually need the other partner(s) to achieve the objectives, a balance must be created to give everyone involved value (Sanders, 2016).

**Partnership Relationships.** As partnerships are developed, it is necessary to clarify the relationships of the partner organizations. If this is not done from the beginning, there is a possibility that the participants involved will perceive one another's roles and responsibilities in

different ways (Sanders, 2016). How these relationships impact governance is complex since specific rules are not always determined, and relationships change as the partnership evolves over time (Joniškienė et al., 2020).

Brinkerhoff (2002) explains four different types of relationships: partnership, contracting, extension, and co-optation and gradual absorption. Partnership relationships develop mutuality, but each separate organization's identity is also maximized. The groups involved work toward mutual goals, but they may go about it in different ways depending on the resources they possess. The groups themselves do not change or adopt the guiding principles of the other partner(s). For example, in a community, multiple groups could join together to sponsor an area event. While they work together to achieve the end result, each group remains the same within itself after the project is complete.

Contracting relationships occur when one organization determines specific aspects needed to accomplish predetermined goals and seeks those in another organization. Government partnerships with businesses described previously would be an example of this type of relationship. One partner requires resources from the other(s) to complete the desired goals, so a contract is developed for supplying what is needed.

Extension relationships mean one side does the directing while the other has little independence and becomes more like an extension of the dominant group. The extension group usually has resources that will enable the directing group to complete its objectives. This might occur when a small local group offers support and resources based on presence in the community but later becomes part of a larger national body. While they still maintain their role in the community, they incorporate the principles and management styles of the larger group.

Co-optation and gradual absorption relationships happen when the less dominant partner is forced to compromise its identity whether consciously or not. This can occur when partnerships are formed between powerful entities such as governments and non-profits. The non-profit may be prodded to give up some of its internal values and structure to fit into the mold the government desires (Brinkerhoff, 2002).

**Partnership Designs.** McDonald et al. (2013) conducted a case study of a partnership between New York University and the New York City school system. They identified five core design elements that improve the chance of a successful partnership (see Table 2).

**Table 2**

*Five Core Design Elements for Partnerships*

Design Element	Description
Championship	Those with authority and power promote the partnership within their organizations.
Interpretations	Designated representatives are assigned the task of communication and clearing up misunderstandings.
Formal agreement	Partners determine and agree they will work together to benefit all rather than for personal gain.
Contact	A dedicated group and process are in place for sharing and discussion.
Action Space	Opportunity is provided for “collaboratively planned joint activity.”

Note. Design elements suggested by McDonald et al. (2013, p. 586).

In another case study, Siegel (2008) found that different sectors of the LEAD (Leadership Education and Development) program had unique roles determined by both their expertise and their purpose for participating in the partnership. Partnership members need to determine and be in agreement about how they will work together and utilize appropriate design strategies to strengthen the chance of successful goal achievement. When partners are involved in decision-making, it enables more interaction which leads to better understanding of one another. It also

encourages relationship building and shared development of standards which can help prevent later internal conflict among partner members (MacDonald et al., 2019).

The current study sought to examine a specific partnership to develop suggestions that could lead to success. It is possible that the relationship between World Changers and the city of Chattanooga has utilized some or all of these elements to achieve the desired goals. Although the language used might be different, evaluating this partnership can offer real-life examples of the elements posited by McDonald et al. (2013) being used in practice.

**Partnership Decision-Making and Evaluation.** As decisions are made about responsibilities, the goals and desired outcomes of the project should be the focus. McDonald et al. (2013) suggests that there are four types of questions to ask. Peter Drucker, in his book *The Practice of Management* (1954), suggests that leaders ask five questions when making decisions. While his context was the field of business, these can be used within CSSPs to ensure that everyone understands the goals, that power balances are addressed, and that all involved know their roles. Table 3 demonstrates how these questions are related and can be synthesized to guide leadership among partner groups.

**Table 3***Questions to Ask When Making Decisions About Partnerships and the Work to Be Done*

According to McDonald et al. (2013)	According to Drucker (1954)	Relationship to Missions
What do you mean to do? How has it changed (if it has)?	What is our business?	What exactly is the intended purpose of the work that is to be done?
What do you assume about the conditions needed to do it? Have they changed?	Who is the customer?	Who is being served? What situations exist that could benefit from mission organizations working to meet needs?
What are the core design elements? Have they evolved, and if so, how?	What is the value to the customer?	What is needed to complete the task/goal at hand? How will this benefit those being served?
What is actually being done? How does it compare with what was intended?	What will our business be? What should it be?	What is the purpose of the work, and how is it being accomplished? Does it meet the needs that have been identified, or are there other areas to address? Is the original goal being met, or should it be modified?

One premise behind Drucker's suggestions was to help workers find meaning in their performance because it is important in life (Toubiana & Yair, 2012). It is also important to set goals that matter most to the organization(s) because this helps to unite those doing the work (Medlin, 2012). Drucker (1981) suggested that it was important to view business, no matter the area of impact, through dimensions such as social responsibility, prudence, self-development, and interdependence. Those involved with decision-making in partnerships need to consider these concepts in relation to the groups and their members as well as to the overall goals of the partnership. The people who will benefit from the work of the partnership include not only those directly and indirectly connected through their association with the partners but also, theoretically, the community as a whole (Nguyen et al., 2021). According to MacDonald et al. (2019), if there is a culture of learning within the partnership, it will be easier to learn from and regroup when failures occur, thus improving the ability to adapt and achieve future success.

### ***Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs)***

Faith-based organizations (FBOs) play an incredibly important role in a variety of cross-sector socially oriented partnerships. These FBOs function with a unique organizational identity that influences how they partner. FBOs are organizations that are usually associated with a specific church, group of churches, or religious denomination. The work they do is undertaken as a way to share the love of God and to meet others' needs through actions that personify that love. Organizational identity is defined as what is distinct within individual organizations and includes core beliefs and values that are maintained over time even if the organization itself undergoes change due to situations (Brinkerhoff, 2002). For faith-based organizations (FBOs), there is an added element of divine authority. Their identity and mission are based on religious and/or spiritual traditions (Lipsky, 2011).

**Significant Historical Developments.** In 1938, a meeting of the World Council of Churches led to “an openness to inviting similarly missioned partners to the table instead of over-emphasizing one denomination” (Rosko, 2017, p. 5). This call to join together was in response to the theme of ecumenicism and called for groups to unite to better meet the needs of people around the world as a way to put religion into practice. The goal was to look past the individual denominations to provide a larger means for addressing needs.

The 1980's and the Reagan administration paved the way for FBOs to take greater roles as they responded to an increase in “poverty, inequality, and social exclusion” (Clarke, 2006, p. 837). Reagan gained religious support for his policies in both the domestic and foreign realms. As a result of the economic policies he established related to aiding developing countries, the presence of FBOs grew to help address needs. The World Bank estimated that up to 50 percent

of the education and health programs in Sub-Saharan Africa were eventually taken over by FBOs (Clarke, 2006).

In 2001, the Faith-Based and Community Initiatives Act supported by President George W. Bush made it easier for FBOs to get government contracts and potential funding (United States Government Accountability Office, 2006). The President created an office in the White House as well as centers within multiple federal agencies dealing specifically with the area of faith-based and community initiatives. This commitment provided means for FBOs to participate more in assisting with providing social services. It helped eliminate barriers to funding through federal grants, as well as encouraged more support for FBO efforts and prevented discrimination based on being religiously affiliated. However, the act also raised concerns about the separation of church and state that has been established in the United States over the years (United States Government Accountability Office, 2006).

**FBOs Today.** One reason for building partnerships with FBOs is that many already have their feet on the ground working in areas such as developing countries and among the neediest. This provides a framework upon which to build to better address the issues of concern (Lipsky, 2011). There is also the potential for the growth of FBOs as immigration brings more diverse people groups to previously homogenous communities. Those who have already established residence are often desiring to assist the new arrivals in adapting to life in a foreign place and with the potential challenges they may have already encountered themselves (Clarke, 2006).

After Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the response of FBOs led to federal recognition due to the speed and contributions of relief offered (Joshi, 2010). According to the Government Accountability Office (2008), it is noted that many individual congregations also provided local relief such as shelter, food, or clothing. Allard (2009) found that when faith and service are

integrated, 88% of FBOs offered such emergency services as compared to only 50% of community-based groups. Often, these services are provided for short-term periods rather than for the long-term due to the focus on emergency situations. In the United States, one out of every seven hospitals are faith-based, 12,000 congregations offer prison outreach programs, and congregations coordinate 1.5 million social programs as well as 7.5 million volunteers each year (FaithCounts, 2021). It has been suggested by van Engen (2019) that FBOs in the 21<sup>st</sup> century may form mission partnerships in a variety of ways (see Table 4).

**Table 4**

*Mission Partnerships Formed by FBOs*

Partnership	Explanation
Church-with-church	A single church partners with another church
Mission-with-mission	One larger mission organization partners with a separate mission organization
Sending-mission with receiving church	A larger mission organization works with a local church within the community
Sending-church with receiving mission	A single church partners with a mission organization and goes to a location where the mission group is serving
Formerly receiving church, now a mission sender, partnering to serve a new receiving church or mission	A church that at one time received mission assistance now works to send members to serve another congregation or the mission organization
Multicultural teams that draw support from and are accountable to person, churches, or mission agencies worldwide	Groups of people from varying backgrounds work together, are supported by, and report to others throughout the world
Local congregations (especially mega-churches) that send their own missionaries, cooperating with older or newer receiving churches or mission agencies	Churches that have the means to be self-sufficient in carrying out mission work send their own people to serve congregations or mission projects run by other agencies
Global, multilateral cooperative mission endeavors	These are larger organizations (such as denominational administrations) that have the resources to carry out mission work throughout the world

Note. List of types of mission partnerships taken from van Engen (2019, p. 55).

According to Rivera et al. (2019), FBOs are able to offer spiritual guidance, and, in many cases, community-based organizations are in place to be the first to offer critical services for

recovery in their communities. Social service outreach continues to be an area in which FBOs contribute to local communities (Sanders, 2016). Rosko (2017) labels this as organizational compassion in which groups respond to suffering, express concern and empathy, and develop a response. For FBOs and their members there exists the “ideal of expressing faith as a loving and engaged communal society” (Rosko, 2017, p. 17). At the same time, care must be taken to reduce the risk of dependency or paternalism developing due to the dynamics of the partnership and its undertakings (Haasl, 2018; van Engen, 2019).

### **Service-Learning Experiences**

The impact on personal development from participation in service-learning or short-term mission projects has been well documented. James et al. (2015) use the term transformational learning to describe the process of learning through experience. Kitchen (2014) stresses the value of growing more like Christ through serving as He served, better preparing individuals to demonstrate His love to the world around them. Covenant community as described by Lingenfelter (2008) relies on eight core elements, six of which are tied to unity as discussed in the theological framework section of this document. These relate to working in partnerships as well as serving with a Christ-like spirit: loving one another, serving together as a diverse body, a unified body working together, submitting to one another, being gracious in speech, and practicing merciful restoration when problems arise. Lave and Wenger (1991) use the term legitimate peripheral participation to describe the process of learning through instruction and observation and then, eventually, moving to putting it into practice. In these situational experiences, learning is relational and set in the context of a particular social and historical climate (Orsmond et al., 2022). There is potential for transformation that comes from these kinds

of encounters, and one of the key aspects is identity development leading to fuller participation within the community (Murphy, 2018).

### ***Service-Learning***

The greatest benefit to service-learning is the opportunity to put into practice whatever is being studied whether that comes from a Christian spiritual development perspective or a general educational one. This type of hands-on learning was proposed by John Dewey as he suggested incorporating experiential learning for students (Anthony & Benson, 2011). Offering students the opportunity to reach outside of the classroom is a form of differentiated learning. Community-based learning assists students in connecting academic studies directly to experiences in the community (Le, 2020). Throughout history there are examples of instruction that promoted moving to a deeper level of understanding and applying what was being learned within one's own life (Anthony & Benson, 2011). It is important to note that "movement to full participation would not be possible if a student were passively 'shadowing,'" so providing experiences to allow actual practice is vital to participant growth (Orsmond et al., 2022, p. 97).

Students need to be prepared to face whatever life brings as the world around them is always changing. Murphy (2018) states that one main concern of those involved in religious education is the opportunity for identity transformation through engagement. Knight (2006) suggests that as students have experiences, they will "learn as they act upon their environment and are, in turn, acted upon by that environment as they undergo the consequences of their actions" (p. 71). Ballew (2017) agrees that there are reciprocal benefits involved where participants can learn from the people they set out to help. Research has shown that service-learning can result in positive changes for students in academics, civics, personal growth (moral and spiritual), and future volunteerism (Lewing, 2019). As an instructor at Gordon College,

Borthwick (2015) finds that 80% or more of the students have been on some kind of cross-cultural trip, often service or mission related.

### ***Value of Service Learning Through FBOs on the Growth of Participants***

Participating in service learning with a FBO leads to growth in several areas. Research has demonstrated that participants have the opportunity to experience diversity of people who may not be like themselves. As the world continues to change, this is important to help with understanding when meeting people's needs. There is also an impact on spiritual development as participants learn to show God's love and put into practice living like Christ. Having hands-on experiences to do this can help foster the lifestyle of being Christlike and not just living in the moment at hand. The final area that service learning can influence is leadership skills.

Participants can learn to plan, make decisions, and adapt as they serve others around them.

**Diversity.** Those who participate in projects that take them out of their usual environment are often able to learn about other cultures and people groups. Diversity is ever-increasing in the world, is considered a key element to life in America, impacts all areas of community life, and students are part of creating this globalization within their communities (Malsbary, 2016). By actively engaging in projects that force them to encounter people who are different, students can develop a desire to learn and understand more about those differences (Priest & Priest, 2008). These types of multi-cultural experiences can accelerate that process and will help "a person to function, interact, and make sense of culturally diverse interpersonal interactions and interpret diverse cultural contexts" (Lucic, 2013, p. 435). According to Orsmond et al. (2022), knowledge is changed through relations and practice with others who offer diverse experiences and participation methods.

When traveling and working in communities different from one's own, it is important to be aware of differences in culture such as concepts of time, routines, and how work is accomplished to avoid misunderstandings that could lead to conflict (Lingenfelter, 2008). Students preparing for service experiences in different locations must learn about cultural differences to prevent insulting or inappropriate behaviors. However, even with the challenges of serving in new environments, many who have participated in mission activities state that they were forced to consider their own identities shaped by the world and cultures in which they live as they had opportunities to experience life in new ways (Linhart, 2006). These types of experiences also give participants practice in adapting to different situations and improving communication skills with various kinds of people (Vu et al., 2014). Being placed into situations that provide cultural experiences different from one's own offers students new perspectives on diversity. The youth are exposed to a wider range of people, customs, and culture. As the world and its communities continue to become more diverse, it will be increasingly beneficial for individuals to experience a wide range of people types, ethnicities, and cultures.

**Spiritual Development.** As previously discussed under the theological framework, there are many passages in the Bible that instruct believers to act as one body, work together, and serve one another. For those tasked with guiding and helping others as they grow spiritually, one aspect that is necessary is learning to work together to minister. The goal is to lead others to make this a lifestyle and not just a temporary or momentary part of life. By providing these experiences for participants, there is hope that they will “raise awareness, foster deeper faith, improve Godly character, and foster deeper compassion toward others” which will, in turn, help shape ethical and moral identity (Linhart, 2006, p. 454).

“Young people need to grow as disciples of Jesus Christ by active involvement in service projects” (Adolescence, Youth Ministry, and World Mission, 1994, p. 17). Since students come to these service experiences at different levels of spiritual maturity, there is an opportunity for them to grow as they learn from one another. They may be forced or encouraged to look more deeply at their own spiritual life by spending time with others (Linhart, 2006). Just as members of the local church are called to build up and learn from one another as the body of Christ, students serving together can do the same as they meet the needs of others.

There has been a great deal of research about the impacts of service-learning or mission project participation on spiritual development. According to Blezien (2004), those who participate acknowledge deeper understanding of God and improved relationships to Him which suggest personal and developmental impacts. Being able to see differences in others, whether those with whom one serves or those to whom the ministry is directed, allows participants to see more of the fullness of God, again relating to the idea of one body without boundaries from race, culture, or locality (Elmer, 2009).

There is also evidence that participation in these types of short-term experiences has longer term impacts on behavior (Linhart, 2006). Participants have been found to be more likely to increase their own faith behaviors, maintain giving to missions, and have a higher incidence of going on future trips. Being put into different social situations with new interpersonal contexts also contributes to development of compassion (Murphy, 2018). Students learn the value of serving and integrate faith with their place in the community (Lewing, 2019). Having to rely on God may take a higher priority in one’s life, especially if serving in an unfamiliar setting such as overseas. It is important for students to realize that as believers they are called to be examples of Christ’s love regardless of their age or spiritual maturity level. 1 Timothy 4:12 reminds, “Let no

man despise thy youth, but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.”

**Leadership.** Those who plan and develop mission experiences for students need to encourage learning about the world and the people who make up that world (Priest & Priest, 2008). By becoming more aware of other cultures besides their own, students will be better able to take on leadership roles as they grow. Realizing the concepts of unity, working together, and their place in the *Missio Dei* will better equip them to serve and take on additional leadership responsibilities.

Participation in projects developed through the mission partnerships in this study offer such experiences. They offer another option to help provide opportunities for young people to have experiences that can help change not only the world but also those who participate (Adolescence, Youth Ministry, and World Mission, 1994). By spending time serving others in different environments, students may be motivated to create leadership opportunities themselves. Griffin (2016) describes a situation in which students spent time working at an overseas orphanage. When they returned home, they were motivated to develop plans to fundraise to obtain much-needed supplies for the orphanage. It has also been found that not only can the motivation be to help those already served, but also to continue “engagement with other people” (Winfrey, 2015, p. 87), thus broadening the scope of leadership possibilities.

It is possible that serving in a different cultural setting will force students to deeply consider how their own identities have been affected by culture and personal histories (Linhart, 2006). In so doing, they are able to deepen their own understanding and extend what they learn to other situations or leading their peers. It is important for those responsible for training the students to incorporate participation as well as offer leadership opportunities. Through

participating in service and mission projects, they can gain confidence, experience, and the push to go beyond the familiar and comfortable which will enable their development as leaders themselves.

### ***Summary of Service-Learning***

The practice of service-learning has long played a role in helping individuals put what they have learned through instruction into hands-on practice. For FBOs, one option is offering mission service experiences. FBOs often provide the opportunity to interact with cultures other than one's own. Due to the wide range of areas within society where FBOs have a presence, there is the possibility of serving in different capacities. As described previously, the impact on participants' growth and future desire to serve is often great. Not only is spiritual development impacted, but personal traits such as leadership, responsibility, and cultural awareness of diversity are influenced. Through a community of practice, participants learn mutuality of engagement, joint enterprise, and shared repertoire (Murphy, 2018; Orsmond et al., 2022; Wenger, 1998). Working with a FBO allows smaller groups such as local church congregations to provide experiences to their members that might otherwise be impossible.

### **Summary of Theoretical Framework**

The study of partnerships encompasses a wide range of types and organizations. For this study, the most relevant were those formed between faith-based organizations and other entities. These will usually take the form of cross-sector social oriented partnerships. Most will involve at least one non-profit or non-governmental organization, although the partnership may be formed with a government entity. There are many factors at play to maintain a successful relationship between partners. Dunkenberg et al. (2019) suggest it is most effective when collaborations are coordinated, have specific goals, and allow all stakeholders to fully participate in working

toward those goals. These include resource possession and allocation, power hierarchies, mutuality, and organizational identity. As Christian organizations consider developing partnerships within communities to serve and meet the needs of the people, it is important to consider these factors as well as the potential for sharing God's love. For the purposes of this research study, the chosen organization also offers mission service opportunities for youth which adds another element of consideration to the logistics of the partnership itself.

Partnerships that are based on mutuality require certain considerations to be able to function effectively. They are formed in different arenas of society, and as a result, resources must be considered and allocated based on availability and need. Within these partnerships, power or organizational structure as well as the relationships between the partner members must be established. It is necessary to consider the design of the partnership, how decisions are made, and how the effectiveness, efficiency, and fulfillment of goals will be evaluated. Essential elements for any partnership to develop and continue include respect, trust, and transparency among partners (Le, 2020). Shumate et al. (2018) echo this idea that CSSPs that offer partners opportunities to establish and strengthen respect, trust, and commitment will lead to better coordination and participation among partner organizations.

Faith-based organizations have become valuable partners for meeting the needs within communities. In the United States, support from leaders has led to legislation to enable these types of groups to carry out work more easily. Christian leaders working with youth are able to utilize the resources and connections of FBOs to provide opportunities for students to put faith into action through service experiences.

Service-learning and mission service experiences have long been included in the fields of education and youth ministry. Students are provided a way to get outside of their own comfort

zones and experience cultures that are diverse from their own. Offering hands-on approaches to learning has been shown to increase the depth of understanding as well as the potential for future impact. Research has shown that spiritual development and potential for further service is improved by putting one's faith into action. Learning and growing in faith and a relationship with God is a vital part of spiritual maturity. Working with organizations that have partnerships in place can offer youth leaders more opportunities to have students get outside of the church walls to practice the servant life that Jesus exemplified.

### **Related Literature**

The concept of partnerships between organizations is not novel, nor is it unique to the arena of mission work. This section will discuss a few of the types of partnerships that have been studied while conducting research for this project. The first part will relate information about the use of partnerships between academic entities and communities. These may be established to provide real-life and hands-on experiences for students, at the request of other organizations such as government, or to address specific community needs. A sub-area within this theme is the use of academic-community partnerships that address health issues or allow medical students and practitioners experience in different environments. Partnerships of this nature may be long-term endeavors which adds to the body of knowledge about what does or does not work well when planning for situations involving hands-on practice that is performed over a length of time.

As discussed previously, cross-sector partnerships involve organizations from different areas of life such as business, government, non-profit, and education. They allow development issues to be addressed in a manner that integrates resources from multiple agencies (Horan, 2019). Yin and Jamali (2021) offer that, in recent years, there has been an increase in partnerships forming between businesses and non-profit groups to address social responsibilities.

These partnerships create their own set of characteristics and may require different structures to comply with the demands of all stakeholders involved. Studying guidelines and suggested practices can offer insight for mission organizations seeking to develop long-term partnerships with localities. Understanding the potential hurdles will help them better prepare and plan. Some of the research about this topic will be discussed in the second part of this section.

Another area of interest to this study is the relevance of participants and partner organizations sharing cultural knowledge and learning about and from one another. Literature often refers to this as cultural intelligence or sensitivity (Elmer, 2009; Lingenfelter, 2008; Livermore, 2009). Differences in how actions are perceived by host communities and people groups can impact the effects of work as well as the establishment of long-term partnership associations. Much of the literature studied mentions pitfalls and suggestions for improving this aspect of communication and interaction. The third part of this section will discuss the role culture plays and how understanding can improve partnerships.

The final part of this section will specifically examine examples of short-term mission work. Much of the available research discusses the effects of such trips on the participants. A smaller body of literature also considers the impacts on the host communities and offers advice about how to better act as servants in those settings. However, there appears to be a dearth of study related to guidance for establishing long-term partnerships specifically for the purpose of short-term mission experiences. This will also be addressed in the final portion of the literature review.

### **Academic-Community Partnerships**

There are many examples of academic institutions developing partnerships with communities around the world and within their own countries. These are sometimes referred to

as university-community partnerships (Strier, 2014). These projects can encompass a variety of activities such as research, service, and assistance with educational or training programs.

According to Strier (2014), these partnerships can be transactional where the involved parties receive some kind of benefits but are unchanged fundamentally. In some cases, this type of situation can lead to distrust or discontentment on the part of one party. Such was the case in Hawaii when Native Hawaiians felt that researchers took from their community without giving anything in return. This led to difficulty for others who wished to establish partnerships to address community issues (Chung-Do et al., 2019).

Academic-Community partnerships can also be transformational where there are multiple dimensions involved, and those contributing seek to achieve common goals and address common social issues. Such partnerships are marked by a greater effort toward shared planning and management, as well as long-term investments (Strier, 2014). In order for this cooperative approach and relationship to be accomplished, there needs to exist “the equitable partnership between community members, organizational representatives, and researchers in all aspects of the research process, highlighting their respective strengths and sharing responsibilities” (Youn et al., 2019, p. 116). The involvement of non-profit organizations requires that the different groups who may influence sustainability are kept informed (Dong & Rim, 2022). This will necessitate collaboration through all stages of planning and implementation, as well as communication and respect for each member of the partnership, requiring a sense of trust and mutual respect and responsibility from the partner organizations and accountability to stakeholders.

### *Medical Partnerships*

Much of the research related to academic partnerships with communities involves health and medicine in some form. It is common for medical training programs to establish these relationships for multiple purposes such as: 1) provide care to underserved areas, 2) provide hands-on learning experiences, and 3) provide cross-cultural training between providers. Often, medical institutions will work with other charity groups such as those that are faith-based or already involved in the communities (Loh et al., 2016). These immersive experiences provide participants with opportunities to focus and think outside the walls of a North American hospital setting, often requiring fast thinking and adaptation of knowledge to performance (Wood & Atkins, 2006). Participating in clinical environments offers learning experiences not available in the usual classroom setting (O’Handley & Erlinger, 2019; Orsmond et al., 2022).

When developing partnerships between medical institutions, other charity or nonprofit groups, and communities, it is important for all involved to play a role in decision-making, communication, how conflicts will be resolved, and what the expected roles and responsibilities will be for each partner (Chambers et al., 2015). These guidelines can be applied to any type of short-term mission partnership, and without them, it could be more likely that the partnership will eventually cause misunderstandings or even fail. It is vital to understand the perceptions and expectations of those receiving the aid, especially when cultural differences exist. One study of medical missions in Nicaragua describes how residents and providers positively perceived the availability of medical aid but also how lack of communication, fear of foreigners, and the potential for future care caused fear and concern (Nouvet et al., 2018). Dunkenberger et al. (2019) found that a more positive outcome results when the community is involved in assessment of needs and setting priorities. Spending more time addressing these issues during the

planning as well as specifying needs of those involved before, during, and after the service experience could assist in preventing or alleviating some of those worries. Communication throughout all stages of planning is vital, especially with those directly involved at the site of the mission work (O'Handley & Erlinger, 2019).

Another area of importance when developing partnerships for medical aid is to consider issues that may arise once the work is in process or finished. Chambers et al. (2015), in describing a partnership between the University at Buffalo, several community organizations, and the community, explains that while there was ample time spent creating a plan, it did not address real-world situations that might arise as the partnership evolved into a more long-term structure or as unexpected issues arose. These potential impediments could be related to areas such as leadership, community events, finances, or staffing. Power hierarchies and inequalities can be a factor as well, which was suggested by Citrin et al. (2017) in their research on a partnership between the Ministry of Health in Nepal and a medical school in California. According to findings, many power structures put academic institutions and physicians above other groups. This is important for those seeking to establish medical partnerships to consider as they work to plan and carry out these missions. It also suggests the importance of learning about the culture of where one will serve, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

**Suggestions for Planning and Development.** Important to the successful implementation of a medical partnership is the planning process. In examining such a situation in rural African American communities of the Southeastern United States, Corbie-Smith et al. (2011) found that it was important to ensure everyone had the same concept of community. It was also necessary to recruit community organizations and continually evaluate the relationships to consider gaps. A steering committee that consisted of representatives from all involved parties

was able to consider the interests of those involved and create the structure and guidelines necessary to ensure the program ran efficiently. Including those directly involved and receiving services can enhance the ability to develop creative solutions to address the needs identified (Holland et al., 2019). This partnership approached the process in a manner that was strength-based rather than focusing on the negative which allowed those involved to maximize the resources available (Corbie-Smith et al., 2011). Dang et al. (2017) devised a 12-step process to assist in planning and eventual implementation of an academic-community medical partnership. While their study is specific to Haiti and work with the University of Maryland Eastern Shore pharmacy program, the procedure could be beneficial even outside of a medical setting. The steps are outlined in Table 5.

**Table 5*****12-Step Process to Planning and Implementing Academic-Community Medical Partnerships***

Step	Guideline	Description
Step 1	Conceptualizing and Building on an Idea	Deciding to initiate the process of developing a partnership
Step 2	Conducting a Needs Assessment	Determining what the needs of the community and the academic institute are
Step 3	Convening a Student Core Planning Team	Giving students a role in the planning of how to address needs
Step 4	Seeking Guidance and Support	Asking for help to decide what to address, how to address it, and who might be able to help
Step 5	Collaborating with Organizations	Utilizing groups that already have relationships in the community as well as those who could provide resources
Step 6	Ensuring Compliance with Legal and Liability Guidelines	Establishing how the project(s) will be managed to meet the requirements of the academic partner as well as the community being served
Step 7	Promoting the Academic Community Haiti Medical Mission	Attracting participants, community members, and others who may either benefit from or assist in the work of the partnership
Step 8	Recruiting and Training Volunteers	Ensuring that there are enough people to carry out the desired work and that they receive adequate preparation
Step 9	Adopting an Intervention Plan and Guideline	Having plans to address situations that may arise and guidelines for dealing with those issues
Step 10	Putting It All Together	Evaluating if the project is ready to begin and if any other elements need to be addressed
Step 11	Implementing the Mission Clinic	Carrying out the work of the partnership within the community
Step 12	Follow-Up and Evaluation	Taking the time to analyze what occurred, if goals were met, and if there are areas for improvement

Note. Steps for planning and implementing found in Dang et al. (2017).

Many studies mention the need for more information exchange prior to groups traveling to communities to offer medical aid. This could also be applicable in other short-term mission settings and fits into the steps listed above. This communication deficit can go in both directions. Compton (2017) states that those traveling mention needing more information than they are given ahead of time. However, those who host suggest their needs and what they would like to see as a result of the project are often not directly considered. In Compton's research (2017), interviews with professionals who help organize these experiences also mention responding to the community's needs and not just focusing on what the academic institute will get from the opportunity. This can lead to negative situations that end up costing the recipients more time or resources than expected or resulting in unintended consequences when perceptions of the volunteers are skewed (Sykes, 2014).

Although these experiences can offer valuable medical aid, there is the danger of cultural bias leading to misunderstandings and incorrect perceptions. In a study of a nursing and midwife program partnership in Honduras, researchers found that students were forced to think quickly, adapt to circumstances different from what is considered their normal setting, and learned about cultural differences while also helping to educate the staff with whom they worked (Wood & Atkins, 2006). In the process, they were forced to realize a difference in care expectations regarding mother and baby. Sykes (2014) mentions that in the case of a partnership in Guatemala, the physicians there often found that volunteers have the misconception that everyone is poor. Due to the potential for these perceptions and assumptions, it is suggested that ethical standards, objectives, and long-term plans can be beneficial when the recipient communities are included in the process (Sykes, 2014). Students participating in the service-learning should be made aware of the work that is expected, logistical details, and cultural

considerations that may present which could negatively impact the work being accomplished (O’Handley & Erlinger, 2019).

### **Cross-Sector Partnerships**

As discussed in the theoretical framework earlier, there are many partnerships formed that are considered “cross-sector,” that is, they consist of parties from multiple areas of life. These could include government agencies, non-profit organizations, religious groups, communities, educational entities, or businesses. Partnerships may be formed between any number of participants coming from many different arenas. Dunkenberger et al. (2019) suggest that nonprofit organizations are especially critical when trying to assist with human services issues and have great potential to adapt to changing needs. Holland et al. (2019) use the term “cross-sector community care teams (CCTs)” (p. 67) and state these allow professional cultures to blend to provide better quality care.

One of the key attributes to a successful partnership across sectors is that of interdependence. This requires working together and sharing resources to accomplish the desired goals, which relates to previous discussion in the theological framework (even though not all involved parties may be of a religious nature). “CSPs are perceived as having a significant and broad social impact, which reaches beyond the specific objectives of the joint venture” (Schmid & Almog-Bar, 2020, p. 295). According to Yin and Jamali (2021), when a partnership logic is in place, partners claim joint ownership of the issue being addressed and integrate it to guide activities and goals. If a substitution logic exists instead, the more powerful partner will separate the issue from activities and goals. Some of the challenges that may present are alignment of differing interests, inequality or unequal resources or allocation of such, power struggles, and cultural differences (van Hille et al., 2020).

Siegel (2008) describes a study of a collaboration between universities, corporations, and the LEAD organization which serves minority students in business education and careers. His research shows that key factors for these types of partnerships across sectors are related to what motivates organizations to join together, how values are created, and how the partnership is managed (Siegel, 2008). Clarke and Fuller (2010) describe this as “the formulation and implementation of deliberate collaborative strategic plans” (p. 85). It is important that those involved are willing to work collectively and make decisions as such. This will assist in planning for changes that may arise and better use the resources available. Sharing and cooperation are necessary, but it is also important to remember that building relationships so that the parties involved develop trust of one another should not and will not happen immediately; time is needed to fully create an atmosphere where the partners feel secure in those relationships (Trim & Lee, 2008). Hesse et al. (2019) state that obstacles will always arise when corporations become partners with other organizations, but, even so, there is more promise of success for cross-sector partnerships.

Clarke and Fuller (2010) offer the term collaborative strategy to describe the process of jointly determining the vision and long-term goals. This also encompasses the actions to be taken by those involved as well as how resources will be allocated to those ends. Their work suggests a three-phase process which includes problem setting, direction-setting, and structuring. In order to accomplish these tasks, organizations may require learning to function in different ways. This learning can be adaptive where knowledge is used to improve quality and efficiency. It could also be generative where the adaptive learning is evaluated and refined (Trim & Lee, 2008). Nguyen et al. (2021) found three levels that must work together: individual, organizational, and societal. The earlier example of the LEAD program partnership exemplifies this process.

Although it began as an altruistic project for many of those involved, it has become a positive return of investment on the part of the members and has led to even more involvement in some cases (Siegel, 2008).

There has been an increase in partnerships created between public and private entities to address issues in society. While these are often beneficial in solving problems that communities do not have time or resources to address, it is important that the community group(s) involved are given input into how the program is designed and administered (Stadtler, 2016). Partners will be more willing to work together if the partnership is seen as a win-win situation. Feeling that one's organization has capacity to bring something to the partnership is also a key to success (Horan, 2019). Developing a system for communication and information sharing can help with coordinating the various stakeholders and ensures input from all involved parties (MacDonald et al., 2019). It is often necessary to ensure that stakeholders are aware of how resources are being used and distributed as well as what progress is being made. This is especially true when tax money is involved or when companies join the partnership voluntarily and need to know their investment is worthwhile (Stadtler, 2016). According to research by Schmid and Almog-Bar (2020), partnerships demonstrate six stages during their life cycle (see Table 6).

**Table 6***Stages in the Life Cycle of Partnerships*

Stage	Description	Characteristics
First	Pre-contact/Pre-partnering or Initiation/Scoping Stage	Determine potential partners, begin to build trust, encourage collaboration
Second	Creation/Formation Stage	Commitment and trust deepen, goals are established
Third	Building/Implementation Stage	Plans and administrative procedures are implemented, roles of partners are defined, partnership is promoted
Fourth	Elaboration/Consolidation or Performing Stage	Skills are consolidated, commitment is sustained, partner organizations unify
Fifth	Reviewing/Revising Stage	Assessment and evaluation of goals and processes
Sixth	Sustaining or Terminating/Adjourning Stage	Decide whether to continue the partnership

Note. These stages were suggested by Schmid & Almog-Bar (2020)

Constant monitoring, evaluating, and adjusting are necessary in cross-sector partnerships to ensure the needs and expectations of all involved are being met. There must be strategies in place to provide support as needed. Trim and Lee (2008) offer three models as cited in Chaffee (1985). The first is linear strategy with a focus on planning and decision-making that is strategic in nature. Next is adaptive strategy which is characterized by senior organizational members conducting assessments and analyzes. Finally, there is interpretive strategy which requires cooperative agreements although organizations participate of their own free will.

At times it may be necessary to involve what van Hille et al. (2020) describe as an intervener who can assist in the initial formation stages. This member of the partnership can offer strategic organization assistance across the sectors of the various stakeholders.

### ***Summary of Cross-Sector Partnerships***

Cross-sector partnerships need interdependence of all parties involved to fulfill the mutual goals that are set. According to Fikkert and Corbett (2012), it is important to focus on community assets first to utilize what is already available and then determine what else is needed. Badriaki (2017) notes the importance of involving groups that already have community trust and respect. The benefits of cross-sector partnerships, especially for mission and faith-based organizations, is multiple perspectives can be combined to fully address the most pressing needs of the community and develop methods to utilize the available resources in the most effective way. Badriaki (2017) also states that partnerships across sectors allow for a “commonality of theological beliefs, denominational connections, project interests, and managerial and operational agreements” (p. 48). The work of Selsky and Parker (2005) emphasizes not only the benefits to cross-sector partnerships but also what should be considered to begin and maintain them.

For the current study, the long-term partnership of a mission organization with a local community was evaluated. Although the literature often mentions partnerships between faith-based groups and other organizations, there is a dearth of information specific to this type of relationship. The partnership being studied involves not only the mission organization and the community but also ministry partners who bring participants to engage in mission work. The literature focuses on explaining many other types of cross-sector partnerships but does not address this specific form and what improves or hinders its success.

### **Cultural Intelligence and Sensitivity**

One of the recurring themes in literature related to short-term mission and cross-sector partnerships is the need for cultural awareness and sensitivity when working with outside groups

(Howell, 2009; Priest et al., 2006; Ver Beek, 2006). The need for awareness is most obvious when facing an overseas partnership, but it is also evident among community groups throughout North America and the United States itself. Even when working on teams at a ministry site, participants may be joined with others who do not share their cultural backgrounds. For this study, the focus was on an organization called World Changers which provides short-term ministry opportunities for students. At the job sites, the participants work in teams consisting of other students and adults from different parts of the United States (World Changers, 2023). The individuals participating may also be serving in communities and to homeowners who are different from themselves. Having the opportunity to learn from others in a diverse setting lends hope that students will develop a desire to better understand those who are different in some way (Priest & Priest, 2008).

Diverse situations may require finding new ways to communicate, better understanding, and personal growth, but there are potential pitfalls due to misunderstandings as well (Elmer, 2009). Often there are cultural differences with respect to how time is perceived, schedules, power, work, and gender. These are potential areas of conflict if the ones going to serve are unaware and unprepared (Lingenfelter, 2008). Cultural intelligence involves learning about others who have different views or lifestyles in order to aid in effective interactions and management of diverse groups (Nosratabadi et al., 2020). Ethical guidelines can be established to assist in managing the diversity and different perspectives that may arise. According to Lasker et al. (2018), there are six principles which can be used to guide ethical practices while also improving cultural intelligence. These are framed in the context of medical short-term mission experiences, but they are appropriate for building other long-term partnerships as well. The principles are: establish a collaborative relationship, commit to benefits of social value, educate

the local community and team members, build the capacity of local infrastructure, evaluate outcomes, and engage in frequent ethical review. It is important to consider customs, traditions, and behavioral norms of the culture to which one is serving in order to offer appropriate interactions (Nosratabadi et al., 2020).

One way for groups to raise cultural awareness is to provide extensive pre-trip orientation and training. Mutual understanding of what is expected, what the desired results are, and how those involved perceive the work being done is essential to success (Farrell, 2013). The *Joining Hands* project in Peru seeks to encourage participants to get past the idea of simply helping a disadvantaged community and rather see their efforts as a joint mission for doing God's work (Farrell, 2013). Livermore (2009) posits there are four key themes that arise regarding this cross-cultural experience: "ethnocentrism, "bounded-set thinking," the money factor, and category width" (p. 273). Each of these will now be explored in more detail.

### ***Ethnocentrism***

Ethnocentrism, which is defined as perceiving the world and other groups from the perspective of one's own ethnic or cultural group, has been noted to be lower after participation in a cross-cultural short-term mission experience (Livermore, 2009). Linhart (2006) explains that ministering in these situations forces one to look at his or her place in the world differently as well as one's own cultural identity. Often, there is an assumption when meeting others that they make decisions and act in similar ways (Palaghia, 2017). To better prepare and understand cultures that are different from one's own, Palaghia gives five stages of learning that can be used in pre-trip training: "identifying new perspectives, understanding principles, efficient use within the new system, use of knowledge of the new environment and integration some elements in one's own cultural thinking" (p. 71). Livermore (2009) suggests that improving cultural

intelligence is necessary to help understand the differences and interactions between cultures, one's own and the one where service is provided.

### ***Bounded-Set Thinking***

Bounded-set thinking views the world as being divided into either/or categories and focuses on similarities and differences (Livermore, 2009). However, such thinking can lead to misunderstandings. In the chapter he wrote for *Handbook of Cultural Intelligence: Theory, Measurement, and Applications* (2009), Livermore discusses how simple behaviors such as smiling, nodding, or remaining silent were interpreted by participants to mean the same in a foreign land as they do in the United States. However, in other locations throughout the world, the cultural norms may be such that these were used as simple acts of respect and not necessarily indications that the hosts were pleased with everything. Palaghia (2017) offers strategies to assist in being more culturally aware including three that relate to this concept.

The first of these strategies is to have awareness of the meaning or possible meaning of conversation, actions, and context. This assists a person in being able to interpret and interact positively which could lead to a better impact for success. The second strategy is paying increased attention to symbols. Even common symbols such as flowers or birds can mean entirely different things in other cultures. The final strategy is to avoid assigning a reason to a particular action. One cannot assume that others act for the same reasons as oneself would when in the same situation (Palaghia, 2017).

This same thought process can be seen in a study by Adler and Offutt (2017) where they examine the concept of gift exchange. While some gifts are acceptable, others are frowned upon in certain cultures, particularly cash money. The value of the partnership and what it provides each participant can vary through tangible and intangible gifts. While those serving may perceive

themselves as offering needed and appreciated materials, it is vital to ensure that the community being served sees them the same way. Providing cultural training prior to service can eliminate misunderstandings that may arise by those meaning well. Understanding how the culture perceives the potential gifts may prevent possible insulting of the hosts.

### ***The Money Factor***

Those serving in cross-cultural settings, especially where poverty is a concern, need to be aware of the power and influence that money can have. Often, the discussion by those who return from serving in short-term mission projects reflects the impact that witnessing poverty had on them. They may suggest that the people were happy and content despite their living conditions (Livermore, 2009). Money can also determine decision-making among communities and determine their roles and accepted behaviors (Clark & Minami, 2015). Money, or lack of it, can influence values and perceptions of equality, leading to potential conflicts (Adler & Offutt, 2017). It is important, therefore, as part of cultural sensitivity and education to incorporate discussions and training regarding how to address what is seen as well as appropriate behaviors. As Livermore (2009) states: “short-term teams need to learn to give in ways that do not perpetuate the tired power structures of colonialism while also learning to receive from the plenty that exists in the communities they visit” (p. 277).

### ***Category Width***

Category width addresses the way morals, and for Christians, the Bible, are perceived by individuals (Livermore, 2009). Christians lean towards universal morals related to categories of what is right or wrong. Other cultures may not have the same boundaries that are present in the world from which the mission trip participant comes. The broadness with which cultures see the delineation between right and wrong is considered category width. An important skill that will be

beneficial to overcome these differences is that of cultural agility, explained as responding effectively when cultural diversity is demonstrated (Palaghia, 2017). It is also important to be able to place oneself in another's situation to better understand the choices that may be made. In a simulated language learning experience at the University of Mississippi, students were assigned to play roles within an Arab community. Depending on their role, they understood and reacted to problems in different ways. This led to greater understanding of the facets that make up a culture and how a person's place in that community can impact how they address a situation (Clark & Minami, 2015).

### ***Communication***

Communication is vital to successfully managing cross-cultural experiences. In the pre-trip education and training, it is important to address differences in how this is achieved in the host community. Learning about how communication is perceived goes beyond simple conversation skills to awareness of body language, customs, and other traditions of behavior. Since an important piece to serving and developing long-term partnerships is relationships, good communication is essential (Griffin, 2016). A study by Cohen (2018) found differences in communication played a role even in interagency collaboration among police departments. The subcultures within each department based on rank as well as the cultural differences among departments based on leadership styles created communication barriers among officers. These differences in culture then impeded multiple agencies working together. Horan (2019) suggests that partnerships can develop roadmaps to help create smooth and accelerated transformations through the work being done.

### *Developing Greater Cultural Intelligence*

Livermore (2009) proposes that when participating in cross-cultural mission experiences, the area of metacognitive cultural intelligence needs to be fostered on a deeper level. This will help support transformative learning from the experience. The stages he provides in order to accomplish this are focus, action-reflection, support and feedback, debrief, and learning transfer. Focus is done pre-trip to help participants focus on what they may experience in the field. It allows for anticipating areas that might require more awareness about cultural differences and preparing for situations that might be uncomfortable or outside one's comfort zone. Action-Reflection involves stretching the participants current knowledge to put familiar skills into practice while serving in an unfamiliar environment. As work is done, reflection is used to determine what, if any, modifications should be made to improve the outcomes of the work. Support and feedback are used to offer encouragement from not only the individuals involved in the project(s) but also from people at home who are supporting the endeavor(s).

Stage four, a time of debriefing, allows for participants to examine what has happened and how it impacted both the community and the individuals providing service. The final stage, learning transfer, helps the participants look at what was learned from the mission experience and determine how to apply it in other areas of life. Through preparation and later reflection and evaluation, deeper learning and understanding can be achieved (Livermore, 2009).

In a study of global health partnerships, Lasker et al. (2018) discusses the perspectives of host communities and how they see volunteers. One of the greatest concerns is a lack of cultural awareness which at times can lead to offensive behaviors, albeit often unknowingly. Other concerns are attitudes of superiority, poor communication, and mismatched skills to needs. The

study recommends eight guidelines which can help alleviate these concerns as well as contribute to a stronger partnership. While these are presented in the context of an overseas medical short-term partnership, they could be adapted to apply to any short-term mission setting. Table 7 details the guidelines as well as an explanation of each.

**Table 7**

*Guidelines for Improving Cultural Intelligence to Strengthen Partnerships*

Guideline	Description by Lasker et al.	Explanation
1	The necessity of preparing volunteers/students before they travel	Preparation provides information about the culture, traditions, and lifestyles of the intended location of service.
2	The necessity of having a partnership with an organization based in the host country that collaborates over time in planning and carrying out the program	Those already involved in the location have inside relationships that can benefit the partnership and its work.
3	Adequate supervision and setting of limits for students	Volunteers should be supervised and provided guidance to minimize the potential for acting in a way that could be perceived negatively by the host.
4	Sustainability in the form of capacity building and/or training of local staff	Plans include encouraging and providing resources for the local staff to become independent.
5	Volunteer safety	The health and safety of the volunteers must be a priority.
6	Ethical principles for patient care	Conditions in foreign host countries may be different from those of the volunteers' homes. It is necessary to establish and enforce ethical practices of care.
7	Needs assessment	Continuing to assess the needs of the community being served helps to eliminate spending resources on ideas that do not truly benefit the host.
8	Evaluation of impact on host community	It is necessary to evaluate how the project(s) have impacted the community to determine if goals have been met or if changes need to be made.

Note. Guidelines taken from research by Lasker et al. (2018).

***Cultural Sensitivity Summary***

As described in this section, the available literature emphasizes the importance of cultural intelligence and sensitivity when embarking on partnerships and mission work with cultures that

are different from one's own. There is the potential for cultures and their individual value systems to collide (Fikkert & Corbett, 2012). Lingenfelter's work (2008) is especially useful to better understand areas of possible conflict and ways to negotiate to a positive solution. When working with students participating in mission experiences, it will be beneficial to prepare them for differences they may encounter. Whether it be from within the community where ministry is offered or among fellow participants, awareness of cultural norms and suggestions for dealing with differences from one's own perceptions can improve the odds of successful work being accomplished.

As demonstrated by Linhart (2006), ministering in situations that are different from one's usual way of life helps to combat ethnocentrism and encourages the participant to evaluate his or her world in new ways. Training and familiarizing participants about the possible cultural similarities and differences before the work is undertaken is mentioned throughout the literature. Palaghia's (2017) stages of learning as well as research by Lasker et al. (2018) and Elmer (2009) also suggest that preparation will improve awareness and successful outcomes. Within the parameters of the current study, this can be applied to helping participants understand the area where the ministry will occur, in turn improving the partnership relationship between the community and the mission organization through positive experiences.

### **Short-Term Mission Experiences**

Much of the literature about short-term mission experiences, particularly for students, focuses on the perceived benefits (or lack thereof) to participants. This is sometimes seen as a means of hands-on or experiential learning, with the intent of transformational learning as described by James et al. (2015). Often, these trips are coordinated through organizations that have developed relationships within communities and offer service opportunities on a continuing

basis. One such organization is World Changers which has been in existence since 1990 (World Changers, 2023). The literature also tends to lean toward studying international experiences, although some groups such as World Changers focus more on domestic locations. While the coordinating organization may differ, the basic concept is usually to offer support for those desiring to give students an opportunity to put their faith into practice and serve as the hands and feet of Christ.

Short-term mission trips often offer exposure to cultures different from one's own. Howell (2009) emphasizes the importance of not taking the uniqueness out of the intended destination. He suggests that often leaders try to underplay a tourism connotation, but in so doing, they omit the pieces of culture that make a location unique. This relates to the discussion of cultural intelligence earlier. Priest et al. (2006) mention that lack of knowledge and preparation about what makes a location unique can lead to being counterproductive or even causing harm in relations with the community. It is also important to consider that those participating are visiting a place and possibly working with a host that is already steeped in social customs and norms. This perception extends beyond the host (possibly a church when in a mission setting) and impacts others who may have preconceived ideas about the visiting mission participants (Barber, 2015). Criticisms arise from this lack of cultural knowledge, such as in Ver Beek's study (2006): "North American short-term missionaries often lack necessary training and respect for "nationals," do not speak the local language, are culturally inappropriate and insensitive, and focus on short-term fixes rather than long-term solutions and meaningful learning experiences" (p. 478). By downplaying the diversity and cultural experiences of the short-term mission trip, participants may find themselves inadvertently contributing to these perceived problems.

While not all research demonstrates it, some have found that participating in short-term mission experiences as an adolescent can lead to a greater likelihood of volunteerism in the future, either locally or globally (Probasco, 2013). Probasco (2013) found that there was a significant increase in volunteering as an adult based on participating in such an experience while in high school. It did not seem to matter if the experience was domestic or international. Beyerlein et al. (2011) mention that much of the existing research, however, focuses on civic engagement with relation to the communities where service was offered. Their study found that civic engagement within one's own community across multiple domains is also impacted positively. Other potential positive effects on the participants include "heightened awareness of poverty, a reenergized sense of compassion for others, and a sense of discomfort (especially guilt) returning to their normal lifestyle" (Beyerlein et al., 2011, p. 792). Trinitapoli and Vaisey (2009) found that the transformative nature of the experience can have an impact on political views, perceptions of social justice, and altruism.

The benefits of short-term mission experiences extend to the communities being served. Hosts such as career missionaries and churches may be involved in the coordination of the project which can open doors for greater ministry opportunities. The participants are able to offer themselves as resources to assist in building projects, personal relationships and sharing, prayer, education, and outreach (La George, 2015). Students participating in these experiences often understand that while they may take away their own learning and development, their ministry is to benefit the local community and its residents (Howell, 2009).

However, there can also be negative impacts on a community. In a study of short-term mission work in Honduras, Ver Beek (2006) found that while the community appreciated the work that was done, the residents also felt like there were missed opportunities for building

relationships. They described feeling as if they had nothing to offer in the way of education or teaching for the volunteers although, when surveyed, the volunteers reported they had learned a lot from the residents of the community. This reflects back to the earlier discussion of the importance of communication between all members of the partnership.

### ***Summary of Short-Term Mission Experiences***

While there is a plethora of literature describing the impact of short-term mission experiences on the participants, the focus tends to be focused on the individuals themselves. The benefits to participating include cultural exposure to others who are different as well as spiritual growth through putting faith into practice. There is the possibility that participating in youth leads to a greater likelihood of volunteerism later in life. Trinitapoli and Vaisey (2009) describe how the transformative impact of the experience can influence perceptions about the world and social issues as well.

Ver Beek (2006) noted that there is also the potential for negative impacts in a community. This suggests that it is important for the group(s) offering mission service to work closely with the community to determine how best to meet needs, what resources are available, and how to minister to achieve positive outcomes. The current study seeks to determine how a mission organization offering short-term mission experiences for youth can best partner with a community to achieve the best outcomes for all involved.

### **Summary of Related Literature**

The literature on partnerships and the necessity of cultural sensitivity and intelligence is relevant to this study. Those participating in mission experiences outside their normal domain will face people and situations different from everyday life. Organizations desiring to develop long-term relationships with partner communities for the purpose of mission work can use

partnerships from other sectors as models for planning and implementation. Short-term mission experiences have mixed results as to their ability to cause sustained personal change, but they have been proven to impact certain parts of development. For this reason, it is important to have organizations that can develop community partnerships and assist in offering these experiences for young people.

### **Rationale for Study and Gap in the Literature**

The majority of the research related to short-term mission work surveyed for this study focuses on the participants and their perceived growth and development as a result of participation in short-term mission projects. There is a smaller body of work devoted to the impact on communities being served. However, there seems to be a lack of information and research related to the design of partnerships with communities to host these types of projects and continue a long-term relationship. There are potentially special considerations that must be addressed when offering mission opportunities to students to ensure their safety, the success of the projects, and the ability to maintain a continuing partnership.

This researcher found a wealth of information about partnerships in other sectors of society such as business, government, and academics. Many of these studies offer suggestions of possible pitfalls as well as useful information about developing solid partnerships. This involves planning, structure, guidelines, and continuing evaluation and adjustments. While not specific to the realm of short-term mission organizations, some of this information could be useful to develop best practices for forming long-term partnerships with communities to offer short-term mission experiences while also benefitting those localities. There is also not a lot of research directed toward offering short-term mission experiences for students within the age range of grade six through college. Most of the literature examines partnerships that involve older

students or adults. The information from this study will help fill a gap in the area of research related to the logistics, potential benefits, and potential drawbacks of developing long-term mission partnerships that utilize student short-term mission projects as ministry opportunities.

### **Profile of the Current Study**

The current study examined an established partnership between World Changers (mission organization) and the community of Chattanooga, Tennessee. Since 2004, World Changers has offered short-term mission experiences for youth in a continued partnership with the city (World Changers, 2023). The research process consisted of a case study of this partnership to examine its perception by leaders and staff of the mission organization, leaders and other constituents within the community, and ministry leaders who are local or have participated in projects at this location. Then, based on data collection and analysis, the researcher offers recommendations of things to consider to encourage success in establishing this type of partnership.

The researcher used an open-ended question survey to collect responses from the participants regarding how they perceive the partnership and what benefits, if any, they feel working within this partnership setting offers. Also included was the opportunity to contribute information about things that could hinder success or be done differently to better the relationship. As survey results were collected, the researcher scheduled personal one-on-one interviews with some participants either in person or using computer software. These were audio-recorded and later transcribed using the MAXQDA program.

Data was coded using MAXQDA to determine similarities and differences in the responses. The coding groups were then organized further into categories according to different themes related to the partnership and the research questions guiding the study. From this, the researcher determined a set of suggestions to assist others wanting to start a similar type of

partnership to provide mission service opportunities for students while also ministering to a local community.

## CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Research Design Synopsis

This chapter provides information about the design process for this study. It begins with a review of the problem being researched, the purpose statement, and the research questions that guided the data collection and analysis process. A brief overview of the research design and methodology will then be followed with more detailed descriptions of the setting, which for this study was the locality of Chattanooga, Tennessee. The next section will describe recruitment and characteristics of participants for the study.

During a case study, it is important that the researcher defines his or her role to aid in countering potential bias or assumptions (Bonner & Tolhurst, 2002; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). How this was accounted for is explained, followed by the ethical considerations that were addressed since the study used human participants and going into the field to collect data. Once these safe measures are established, the chapter will continue with a description of data collection methods and instruments. This study utilized interviews, surveys, and document analysis to gather data. After a description of these, the chapter will discuss the procedures used for each method or instrument.

The final section of the chapter will explain the data analysis process. This includes analysis methods as well as how trustworthiness was ensured. Credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability will each be discussed.

### The Problem

Prior research has examined the role of service-learning or mission service experiences on the spiritual development of youth (Ballew, 2017; Beyerlein et al., 2011; Blezian, 2004; Kitchen, 2014). The value of these experiences has been considered under the theme of

legitimate peripheral participation, a term originated by Lave and Wenger (1991). According to Csinos (2010), this was a method used by Jesus as He trained the disciples to prepare them for carrying on their work after His death. Much of the research focuses on the impacts for the participants themselves (Ballew, 2017; Farrell, 2013; Hancock, 2014; Wilder, 2004). However, the same focus has not been given to the communities being served. Both Jones (1998) and Wilder (2004), in their studies related to this area, suggest that a gap exists which could be filled by research directed toward the communities and their role.

World Changers has been involved with offering student short-term mission experiences since 1990 (World Changers, 2023). Although the organization has incurred several leadership and structural changes, they have continued to maintain partnerships with numerous cities, mostly in the Southeastern United States. The purpose of this research study was to examine a long-term partnership, associated with the city of Chattanooga, Tennessee. The work involves combining the resources of the local government, local service agencies, local church groups, and World Changers. This union demonstrates the necessary components of a cross-sector social partnership as well as legitimate peripheral participation as the mission teams practice hands-on ministry while addressing community needs. Specifically, this study focuses on the logistics of the partnership by analyzing responses of partner organization representatives to determine what contributes to the success of such a relationship. Possible hindrances to a positive working partnership are also considered. The goal was to develop a set of recommendations for other organizations who may wish to initiate the same type of relationship that addresses the two areas of interest: student short-term mission opportunities and long-term community/organization partnerships.

## **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore the long-term partnership of World Changers with the community of Chattanooga, Tennessee to understand best practices for creating similar cross-sector partnerships involving short-term mission work. Within this research, long-term partnership is defined as an arrangement existing for at least ten years. There are three theories guiding this study. The first is covenant community as described by Lingenfelter (2008). According to Lingenfelter's description, covenant communities bind together with Christ as the center. The second is legitimate peripheral participation as described by Lave and Wenger (1991). This concept allows individuals to work towards full participation through a process of observation and gradual added responsibility. For this study, it is related to students putting faith into action through mission service. The last is cross-sector social-oriented partnerships as described by Selsky and Parker (2005). These partnerships exist between organizations from different social sectors. The research for this study is related to long-term partnerships established between a community and a mission organization that offers these experiences for students.

## **Research Questions**

**RQ1.** What, if any, benefits do members of the community perceive from long-term partnerships between the community and mission organizations that offer short-term student mission experiences?

**RQ2.** What, if any, benefits do ministry leaders, both local to the community and those who have worked as participants, perceive from long-term partnerships between the community and mission organizations that offer short-term student mission experiences?

**RQ3.** What, if any, benefits do leaders and staff of mission organizations offering short-term student mission experiences perceive from long-term partnerships with communities?

**RQ4.** What, if any, potential areas exist that could improve or impede the success of long-term partnerships between the community and mission organizations that offer short-term student mission experiences?

## Research Design and Methodology

The research design chosen for this study was a qualitative case study. This design allowed for data collection from an existing partnership and the people who continue to foster it. Data was collected from individuals impacted at all levels of the partnership. Working within a specific community to examine the elements of the partnership that make it successful and long-lasting fits well with a case study model of design. Qualitative data collection allows for lengthier responses rather than simple rating scales. Since interviews and free-response questions served as the basis for most data, using a qualitative design was appropriate. Dul and Hak (2008) describe the case study as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the object of study and context are not clearly evident” (p. 4). According to Yin (1994), case studies are useful when the questions being asked are related to how or why, if the researcher does not have much control over the situation(s), and when examining phenomenon in real-life context is the focus of the study. Bromley (1986) posits that the value of a case study is that it allows an individual case to be examined in its actual context. This allows the researcher opportunity to get close to the subjects in a natural setting as well as to have access to their emotions and thoughts.

Leedy and Ormrod (2019) define qualitative research as focusing on phenomena as it occurs in the real world or its natural setting. According to Galvan and Galvan (2017), it is appropriate to use when beginning with a general problem that does not have specific hypotheses presumed to guide the study. It is also appropriate to choose a purposive, smaller sample rather than a random, larger one (Galvan and Galvan, 2017). Leedy and Ormrod (2019) agree with this, stating that it is important to choose the sample that will yield the most information. They also mention that data collection will often be in the form of notes rather than statistical numbers.

Ebneyamini and Moghadam (2018) suggest that case studies are useful to help capture the complexity of a phenomenon which made this the method of choice for this research undertaking. Case studies allow for collection of multiple data forms such as interviews, open-ended questionnaires, documents, observations, field notes, and audio-visual materials (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) which provides more depth to the study. Such collection methods were utilized in this study.

In the partnership that was studied, there are multiple stakeholders who are involved in maintaining and coordinating the relationship. Each has a role to play, and through these roles, they may offer differing perceptions of the partnership. Since the study focused on a long-term partnership, individuals who have been involved for different amounts of time may also have differing perceptions of what is successful and what is not. This case study involved gathering data from individuals associated with the mission organization (World Changers) and those who represent the city of Chattanooga, Tennessee and its resources. Also, participation was sought from local church leaders and group leaders who have participated in partnership activities at some point.

Data collection involved open-ended survey questions as well as direct interviews and other media such as documents and news reports to achieve the case study goal of real-world data in its natural environment as the phenomenon occurs. Due to World Changers projects only occurring one or two weeks in the summer, planning was required by the researcher to conduct direct observation which was limited to a single day. Three directed personal interviews were conducted with respondents who indicated a willingness to do so, and the researcher was able to engage in general conversation with one of the local coordinators during the day spent in Chattanooga visiting work sites.

### **Setting**

The setting for this study was the city of Chattanooga, Tennessee. Chattanooga has had an ongoing partnership with World Changers since 2004 (World Changers, 2023). The length of the relationship offers a perspective about maintaining and continuing this kind of relationship. Due to the experience of those involved within the community, it was a solid choice for obtaining participants who have familiarity with both the partnership and the positive and negative aspects of such an endeavor. While the partnership in Chattanooga demonstrated specifics that only pertain to that city, the general structure of the partnership could be applicable in other locations desiring to develop the same kind of ministry opportunities.

### **Participants**

For this study, the researcher included individuals who have an association with the partnership. This involved those who had or currently have leadership roles in World Changers, whether as national level staff or serving in a leadership capacity during the project time period in Chattanooga. Potential community leadership participants from the different sectors involved with the partnership in the city of Chattanooga were also contacted. Finally, individuals involved as ministry stakeholders, whether as church leaders in the city itself or as youth leaders who bring students to the projects, were asked to participate. The researcher was able to collect 11 completed surveys, conduct three interviews, collect notes from an on-site visit, and examine 32 documents and media which included references to individuals representing the three target groups. The complete list of participants and their associations with the partnership is found in Appendix G. A full list of documents and media used during the analysis process is located in Appendix H.

Participants were selected for this study using a purposive sample, defined by Leedy and Ormrod (2019) as being those who will yield the most information. Galvan and Galvan (2017) suggest that researchers choose these subjects based on who is deemed to be good sources for data. To begin the research, a sampling of individuals who were available was utilized. These included people such as government and community organization leaders, church leaders, the administration of World Changers, and the local Baptist association director. Contact information was obtained using online resources. Individuals were invited to participate via email or physical letters mailed to them. Then, the researcher used snowball sampling which is defined as asking these individuals to refer other potential participants (Leedy & Ormrod, 2019). This included references by the World Changers leadership of those who have participated in work in Chattanooga either as youth leaders bringing students, as staff, or as project directors. After securing access to media documents through newspaper archives and television station websites, the researcher invited individuals mentioned who were still employed by the media outlets to participate.

Possible participants were first offered an open-ended questionnaire link by email through the SurveyMonkey website to determine if they were willing to answer further questions about the partnership. The researcher continued to recruit participants until data saturation was reached. To determine this point of saturation, analysis and coding were ongoing as data was collected. When the data no longer demonstrated novel information, data collection was concluded. This allowed the researcher to analyze similarities and differences in perceptions of the benefits as well as potential hinderances to a successful partnership. By including individuals from different groups that have a role in the partnership, there was representation of the various sector arenas. Since this study focused on the partnership of a specific locality with a unique

mission organization, using a case study to answer the research questions allowed the researcher to focus on this one situation and make suggestions that could be applied to other partnerships.

### **Role of the Researcher**

Bonner and Tolhurst (2002) suggest that case studies offer advantages since the researcher becomes an insider while conducting field research. These advantages are 1) a greater understanding of the culture, 2) the researcher's presence not interrupting the natural flow of social interactions, and 3) establishing intimacy which leads to greater truth in data collection. The researcher plays a key role in the data collection process since he or she is usually the one conducting interviews and making observations (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The researcher has been involved with World Changers mission experiences since 2004, participating in multiple cities throughout the United States. This helped create the interest for the study. There was a potential for research bias regarding the positive aspects of how World Changers develops partnerships. This needed to be addressed and accounted for during data analysis since some results demonstrated negative characteristics. The researcher remained aware of personal bias that leans favorably towards World Changers and understood that, as with any partnership, there were things that some participants may want done differently. The mindset of the researcher remained open to whatever results the data demonstrated. Such openness allowed the researcher the opportunity to contribute to the partnership by sharing the results to help improve any negative perceptions of the partnership between World Changers and the city of Chattanooga. The reader may observe that this research does not contain a critique of World Changers. While the researcher is passionate about the topic and the organization being researched, it should be noted that the goal of this research was to understand the impact of long-term partnerships and not the evaluation of the World Changers organization itself.

For this study, the researcher was involved in obtaining a participant sample, constructing the questionnaire questions, and interviewing participants who agreed to provide further information. The researcher used suggestions for developing appropriate interview questions as noted in Leedy and Ormrod (2019). Based on the responses to the initial questionnaire, a general outline was developed to guide the personal interviews (see Appendix D). However, due to the conversational nature of the interview, it was sometimes necessary for the researcher to ask other clarifying questions that were not topics specifically mentioned on the guide. The interviews allowed the researcher to delve deeper to better understand the perceptions of the participants. The specific questions asked during each interview are listed in Appendix F.

Data analysis was conducted by the researcher using MAXQDA software to determine themes and patterns based on responses. While the researcher has prior relationships with some of the potential participants, bias was addressed through data triangulation and anonymous recording of survey results. This provided the necessary leverage to all participant voices to balance the possibility of bias. It was also the role of the researcher to examine other relevant materials and make notes that were useful to the study. The researcher was able to access archives of the local newspaper to examine articles published throughout the length of the partnership. Local television story transcripts provided additional data sources.

### **Ethical Considerations**

The first step to conduct an ethically solid research study was to complete the IRB process through Liberty University. The researcher submitted the appropriate forms using the online tools available. Modifications were made as recommended by the committee and resubmitted until final approval was granted. The approval document is included as Appendix A.

Since this study required human participants, it was necessary to obtain informed consent from each participant before they began to answer any questions (see Appendix B). Using online participation, this was accomplished through an electronic disclaimer the participants should agree to before receiving the questionnaire. Continuing to the survey questions implied that consent to include the data was given by the participant. Since the surveys were submitted anonymously, the responses remained anonymous for the purposes of analysis. Participants were also given the opportunity to remove themselves from the study at any point they so desired by clicking a link in the survey window.

A separate link was included at the end of the initial survey to allow participants the ability to provide contact information if they were willing to interview one-on-one with the researcher. Although the researcher was aware of the individual being interviewed, all data collected was used without identifying information. This maintained confidentiality of the interview participants while allowing for more in-depth questioning.

Information that was collected was kept secured using a password protected file on the researcher's password protected computer. Handwritten documentation was transferred to electronic formats through transcription. These were also kept secured within the password protected area. All interviews were recorded in audio format using a laptop computer or tablet. These files as well as the transcripts of the recordings were included in the secure file area. All information transferred to the MAXQDA program was secured within the researcher's personal account that required login credentials to access.

### **Data Collection Methods and Instruments**

Data collection when using a case study methodology is based on real-life, actual setting activities. This is also called field data collection (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). One key

difference in data collection when using the case study method is that the participants are purposefully chosen. This method of purposive sampling (Leedy & Ormrod, 2019) was leveraged in this research study. Due to the nature of a case study, care was taken to avoid research bias by contacting individuals connected to all invested members of the partnership. Many researchers encourage using observation and interviews, although care should be taken to ensure these are effective and that researcher bias is accounted for in documentation of the same (Campbell, 2015; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Leedy & Ormrod, 2019; Yin, 1994; Yin, 2016). Due to this potential influence on the data, the researcher utilized the MAXQDA software to transcribe and code data to eliminate the possible impact of personal bias. Since the researcher was directly involved in the data collection process in this case study, it was necessary to be aware of past experiences, make detailed observation notes, and look at data objectively (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

### **Collection Methods**

This study made use of an open-ended question survey (see Appendix C) for initial data collection (Bromley, 1986; Campbell, 2015; Yin, 2016). At the end of the initial survey, participants who completed all of the questions were directed to a response screen to ask if there was interest in a one-on-one interview with the researcher to provide more in-depth information. In-person or audio interviews were conducted and recorded. Following this, the recordings were uploaded to the MAXQDA program to be transcribed. The researcher served as the interviewer. The researcher also sought out documentation from multiple sources such as the mission organization, media, and local community leaders to see if there was other data to be gleaned that was relevant to the research questions. Accessing the archives of the local newspaper, the Chattanooga Times Free Press (CTFP), provided articles that covered a wide range of dates

reflecting the longevity of the partnership's work in the community. By examining names of reporters from these articles, it was possible to use web resources to determine if any were still employed with the newspaper. Invitation to participate was sent to those who were still available. The researcher also contacted individuals associated with the local television stations to inquire about possible archived news stories or transcripts.

These data collection methods provided information about how different stakeholders perceive the partnership and whether having a long-term relationship creates benefits to those involved. As data was coded and analyzed, it shaped the development of the questions that were asked during the one-on-one interviews. The interviews occurred at different points in the research process, so the specific wording of the questions asked to the individual interviewees varied.

### **Instruments and Protocols**

Since case studies allow for multiple methods of data collection, they present the opportunity to use a variety of sources (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Another advantage is that data analysis can begin during and continue throughout the data collection process (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This research included an approach similar to McDonnell et al. (2000) who used semi-structured interviews, observation of meetings, and the collection and review of documents. The advantage of the case study and the variety of data collection methods is creating a multidimensional picture of the individual situation being studied.

### ***Surveys***

Initial data collection began by administering an open-ended question survey to those who indicated willingness to participate in the research (see Appendix C). This allowed for more detailed descriptions to be provided by the participants. Since the views of the partnership and its

management may be different based on with which sector of it the participant is associated, this allowed for fuller detail and data collection. Participants were asked the length of time they have been involved with the partnership as well as the role(s) they have played. Survey questions were based on research of other case studies and the specific research questions directing this study.

After obtaining approval from the IRB to begin the research (see Appendix A), surveys were pilot tested using individuals who have been involved with World Changers in other locations with whom the researcher had contact information. This helped determine if the questions would result in answers that would lead to the desired information to answer the research questions. The researcher sent a copy of the survey link to those individuals with instructions to answer based on their experiences even though they had not been to the Chattanooga project. This led to several surveys being submitted blank since the first question was designed to exit the survey if the participant chose the option of not being associated with the Chattanooga project. The researcher re-sent the pilot study invitation with better explanation of how to answer the first question. This yielded more results from the survey. If the research is repeated, a copy of the survey eliminating that option should be used for pilot testing. Based on the feedback that was given, it was determined that the survey questions would provide the information needed to answer the research questions.

Survey questions (see Appendix C) asked for the participants' views and perspectives regarding the partnership. It was necessary to ask questions related to perceived benefits or negative impacts of the partnership. The first two questions requested information about the participant's role as well as the length of time he or she had been involved with the partnership. The next three questions inquired about perceived benefits or negative aspects related to the community, mission organization, and ministry stakeholders. The final section asked for

information about possible ways the partnership could be improved and advice for others who may be considering beginning this type of endeavor. The survey consisted of open-ended questions allowing participants to include whatever they felt was relevant. At the conclusion of the questions, participants were asked if they would be willing to engage in an actual interview with the researcher. If they agreed, they were asked to provide contact information that was not attached to their specific survey results to maintain anonymity of the survey data.

Eleven completed surveys were obtained out of 18 that were started, giving a 61% completion rate. Since information was provided anonymously, it is not possible to determine how the participants were recruited or obtained the survey link. One survey was completed through question two, but it was not finished. The others either indicated they were not associated with the Chattanooga project or did not complete any questions after the first. The completed surveys included individuals associated with WC leadership, community members, and ministry leaders, both those who brought students to the project and those from the area. This allowed a wider perspective of opinions for the data analysis process. The associations for each participant are listed in Appendix G. For the purposes of data evaluation, the responses of participants who served with WC leadership or as ministry leaders but were also community members were included under the former categories rather than the latter. This resulted in two community members, five individuals associated with WC leadership, and four ministry leaders completing the survey. Five survey participants chose to continue to the additional survey to provide contact information for possible personal interviews. The complete list of survey respondents is included in Appendix G.

## *Interviews*

Leedy and Ormrod (2019) provide several suggestions of how best to design interview questions and conduct these data gathering sessions. Two of the most important are to develop a set of questions in advance and to create an interview guide to follow. As mentioned previously, this will help keep the interview on track, provide consistency, and enable the researcher to organize notes from the interview better. Based on the initial data collection and coding from the survey, a set of questions that probes deeper was developed. Then, a general interview guide (see Appendix D) was developed with the expectation that specific questions may be added during the actual interviews based on responses. This allowed for a semi-structured interview process that gave the researcher freedom to probe deeper if needed.

Interviews were recorded by audio means using a laptop computer or tablet. Transcription was accomplished by uploading the audio files to the MAXQDA software. The researcher also used an individual involved in the field of education to cross-check the transcriptions for accuracy. Copies of the interview transcripts were provided to the individual interviewees for cross-checking as well. Although the researcher was aware of the specific individual represented in each interview, the only identifying information that was included in data analysis was their stakeholder position in the partnership and the length of time of involvement. Interview questions were developed based on when the interviews occurred and what the data had demonstrated at that point in the analysis process. For this reason, each interview was different, and responses led to other questions as well. A list of the questions asked of each individual is included in Appendix F.

From the initial survey information, five respondents indicated willingness to interview with the researcher. Using the contact information provided, the researcher was able to set up

recorded interviews with three of the respondents, who are included in Appendix G which details the study participants. One was conducted in person early in the data collection process while the other two were conducted virtually after more survey and document data had been obtained.

These were recorded and then transcribed to be analyzed with other data using MAXQDA.

Another of the survey respondents did not participate in a formal interview with the researcher but allowed the researcher to spend a day during the WC project riding along to different project sites and assisting with administrative activities. Notes from conversations held during the day were also incorporated into the data.

### ***Observations***

The researcher was able to spend one day of observation during the week that WC was in Chattanooga in July 2022. During this time, she was given the opportunity to ride along to various worksites with one of the local coordinators. Throughout the day, the coordinator talked about some of the logistics and challenges that the project had faced over the past few years, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic period. This individual also had knowledge of the extent of the work completed over the length of the partnership, having filled out paperwork for government officials throughout the years of participation. Notes were taken about the conversations and transferred to MAXQDA for analysis.

During the day, the researcher was able to see first-hand the coordination of local churches, participants, homeowners, and other community organizations and businesses. A local news crew arrived at one site to conduct interviews with WC participants.

### ***Document Analysis***

Request was made to the leadership of World Changers for access to their files such as projects completed, financial records, resource management, and media coverage. However, due

to organizational changes over the past few years, the only record available was the results from a survey given to ministry leaders who brought students to the project in 2022 (see Appendix J). Local media outlets were contacted, and the researcher used their websites to seek out stories or reports related to World Changers in Chattanooga. This led to accessing the newspaper archive database of the CTFP as well as television report transcripts.

The Chattanooga Times Free Press online archive yielded 26 articles and letters from 2004 to the present. These were copied into MAXQDA for coding analysis. Local television station news directors were contacted requesting archived transcripts of stories about WC. This resulted in four transcripts from 2007 to the present. Two additional documents were located related to government business that included WC. All of these were also copied into MAXQDA. A complete list of the documents and media analyzed is found in Appendix H.

## **Procedures**

Before contact was made with potential subjects, the researcher completed all necessary requirements for approval by the Liberty University IRB. After developing the survey instrument and interview guide as described previously, the researcher presented documentation requesting approval by the IRB. Once approval was obtained, the researcher began the participant selection process. The IRB approval document is located in Appendix A.

## ***Gathering Participants***

The initial contact for participants was conducted through World Changers leadership and the Hamilton County Baptist Association director. They were asked to provide contact information for others or to forward the survey link to those they felt could benefit the study including:

- Community leaders
- Community members
- World Changers staff
- Project coordinators
- Local ministry leaders
- Participating ministry leaders

Email addresses and phone numbers were solicited. The researcher made first contact with each individual using an email introduction letter (see Appendix E) to ascertain if they would be willing to provide responses to the open-ended survey being used for the first round of data collection. World Changers leadership and the association director were also included as potential participants.

As contacts were made, potential participants were asked to suggest others who might be interested in contributing to the research. As more names were generated, contact information for those individuals was also requested. If the participants felt comfortable, they were requested to forward the introductory email with the survey link to those who might contribute to the research. The researcher reached out in the same manner as the first round of contacts involved with the partnership as new potential participants were identified.

Once survey results began to appear, the researcher noticed that there was a lack of responses from community members. The researcher spent time accessing the many government websites for Chattanooga and Hamilton County. This yielded more names and email addresses for local leadership. The introductory email with the survey link was sent to these individuals. In response, the researcher received replies suggesting others to contact. Physical letters were also mailed to some of the offices that explained the project and included the survey link. Due to the

anonymity of the survey, it is not possible to determine how this impacted the data collection, but community members were represented in the final list of participants. The complete list of survey participants, their association with the partnership, and their years of involvement is located in Appendix G.

### ***Data Collection***

Before beginning to contact any potential participants or collect any data, permission was obtained from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Liberty University to proceed (see Appendix A). Through this process, the researcher provided copies of the kinds of survey questions that would be asked and how data would be collected and analyzed. It was necessary to provide evidence to ensure that participant information and responses would be kept confidential. Descriptions of those processes follows in this section. This study requested information about personal perspectives of how a partnership functions, if maintaining the partnership is beneficial, and what guidelines could be helpful for others seeking to begin the same type of relationship. It can be assumed that the data collected presents a minimal risk of harm to the participants due to its nature and the methods used to obtain it. Consent to participate was obtained by having participants read a consent statement and check the box that they agreed to participate at the start of the online survey (see Appendix C).

The first step in actual data collection after receiving approval was to provide an open-ended survey to those who agreed to participate. This type of survey was used to allow for descriptive and detailed answers to questions related to the partnership and its continued operation. The questions required responses that could not be answered through scales or checking of boxes from a list. These were developed by the researcher to ensure the responses provided information that could be coded to address the research questions. A field test of the

questions was conducted through a pilot test using individuals who have participated in World Changers work in other cities. Participants were recruited from individuals with whom the researcher had contact information. The pilot test provided sample data to determine if the questions generated responses relative to the research questions guiding this study. Pilot test participants were asked to provide feedback to aid the researcher in fine-tuning the question format before distribution to study participants.

Surveys were distributed by an emailed link to an online survey using the SurveyMonkey website or by physical letter mailed to potential participants that contained the survey web address. The first page of the survey presented the informed consent agreement (see Appendix B). Respondents who agreed to participate were taken to the first page of the survey. These individuals were then asked to provide information about their association with the partnership and the length of time of their involvement. They were then directed to questions that asked about perceived benefits or negative aspects of the long-term partnership related to community members, the mission organization, and ministry partners. The final question addressed advice for others who may be interested in starting this type of partnership. At the end of the survey, they were asked if they would be willing to participate in a personal interview with the researcher. If so, they were directed to another page to enter contact information. This was collected separately from the data collection survey. The complete survey is located in Appendix C.

Confidentiality of responses was achieved by avoiding attaching personal information to the surveys. Additionally, participants were assigned a participant letter to avoid the use of names in the reporting process. Specific responses were not associated with identifying

information such as email addresses or names. Responses were maintained in spreadsheets in a password secured file to which only the researcher has access.

Initial coding of responses occurred using the MAXQDA software, and as it was completed, the researcher developed a guiding set of questions to use while conducting more in-depth personal interviews. During the actual interviews, which were recorded using audio, the researcher adapted other questions needed to achieve the desired level of information, giving the interviews a conversational tone. The list of interview questions for each individual is found in Appendix F. When recording data and creating transcriptions from the interviews, individual names were not included. As with the surveys, only the area of the partnership with which the person has been associated and length of involvement was noted.

Documents and audiovisual materials were requested and located using online search methods. The archives of the Chattanooga Times Free Press were accessed, and a search was conducted for articles or other material related to WC. The researcher also directly contacted several reporters mentioned in the documents who were still employed at the newspaper. News directors of the local television stations were contacted for transcripts or links to previous stories about WC. This effort provided other sources of data. Detailed notes were maintained about what was examined and its content. These materials were digitized using scanning and stored in the secure folder mentioned previously. Copies of the documents' text were uploaded to MAXQDA for inclusion in the coding process. The full list of documents analyzed is available in Appendix H.

### **Data Analysis**

As data was collected through survey results, document processing, and interviews, the process of analysis was ongoing. As the researcher began to develop the answers to the research

questions, any gaps in information were addressed by further contact with potential participants and searching available materials for other resources.

### **Analysis Methods**

As surveys were received, the data was input into the MAXQDA software designed to assist in coding and analyzing qualitative data. The researcher also manually reviewed the surveys to determine if there were omissions. This resulted in some surveys that were started being removed from the data due to being incomplete. When personal interviews were conducted, the recordings were transcribed using the MAXQDA software. These transcripts were added to the data files in the MAXQDA program to enable coding. An outside reviewer who is in the field of education was employed to proofread these transcripts for accuracy. Transcripts were also shared with the individual who was interviewed to ascertain if the data was presented correctly.

While data was being collected and input into the software, an initial round of open coding was used to begin to break the information into smaller pieces relevant to the research questions. This helped the researcher visualize how the responses fit together and brought to attention consistent or similar phrases. Organizing these smaller pieces allowed the researcher to have a better and more thorough understanding of the responses. A system was developed to group similar responses. Labels used during the coding process are listed in Appendix I.

After the open coding process was complete, axial coding was used to determine connections and related categories among responses. As a result of this, the researcher determined that three larger themes emerged: Logistical Considerations and Impacts, Community Considerations and Impacts, and Spiritual Considerations and Impacts. The coding process assisted the researcher in developing questions related to gaps in the data to address

during personal interviews with participants. The themes and patterns that emerged were used to address the results related to the research questions guiding the study.

### **Trustworthiness**

Checking for accuracy is important to ensure that the results have been analyzed correctly and that the ensuing conclusions are correct. Creswell and Creswell (2018) suggest it is necessary to prove validity which determines “whether the findings are accurate from the standpoint of the researcher, the participants, or the readers of the account” (p. 199). It is also essential to check for errors in transcripts and consistency in coding (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) and to document the steps taken to facilitate reliability (Ebneyamini & Moghadam, 2018). As the coding process continued, the researcher re-examined the transcripts and documents multiple times to compare these with the findings of the MAXQDA software.

For each survey, interview, and document, the researcher noted recurring ideas as determined from the MAXQDA results. These were used to develop a codebook that lists the name of the code as well as a description of it (see Appendix I). Once the coding was complete, the researcher looked for themes determined by recurring ideas and established which codes related to each theme. Participants’ responses were then sorted into the themes to answer each of the research questions as established by the codes assigned to them by MAXQDA.

### ***Credibility***

The MAXQDA software program was utilized to aid in the coding process. This program allows for audio recordings to be uploaded and transcribed digitally. The researcher shared transcripts of interviews with the interviewees after checking for accuracy of transcription. This process helped ensure that the data was being presented correctly. It also allowed the interviewee to add to the data if they noted gaps in their responses.

### ***Dependability***

The documentation of the research process and results includes lists of all coding labels used. It also includes copies of the survey and interview questions used to collect data. Specific examples applicable to the coding labels are incorporated into the final document to further understanding of the coding process and how responses were connected to answer the research questions.

### ***Confirmability***

Specific pieces of data are included in the documentation as examples. When discussing the coding groupings, relevant quotations from the transcripts and surveys are included as well to provide better understanding of how the relationships were determined. Requests for the complete data set will be considered individually as they are received.

### ***Transferability***

While this research was conducted with one particular mission agency working in a specific city, the study could be replicated with other agencies or locations. World Changers itself may have different operating procedures that apply to their partnerships in other cities. The research process could be used to examine other partnerships. There is the potential to study other mission organizations, other locations, and whether offering mission experiences to other age groups besides youth matters in how the partnership and its work function. Since this study focuses on mission organizations offering a specific type of service experience, its results may not be applicable to other cross-sector partnerships between other kinds of organizations. However, the concepts guiding the study to examine benefits and hinderances could be applied to discuss the existence of the same in other situations. The results of RQ4 could be especially helpful for other organizations seeking to develop partnerships for addressing social concerns.

## Chapter Summary

This study sought to determine if there are benefits to a long-term partnership between a mission organization that offers mission opportunities to youth and a local community where the work occurs. The researcher set out to understand what those benefits are if they exist and to create a set of suggestions for other organizations desiring to create these types of partnerships. Since World Changers has a long-term ongoing partnership with the city of Chattanooga, Tennessee, the project utilized a case study methodology to examine a specific partnership of this nature.

Stakeholders were recruited from different members of the partnership, providing a more complete understanding of the possible benefits and hinderances. The goal of this research was to determine suggestions for other organizations seeking to develop this type of partnership relationship within a community. Survey results, one-on-one interviews, and documents were used to gather data. This data was then analyzed using the MAXQDA program to assist in the coding process. As common labels emerged, they were grouped into three larger categories reflecting the logistics, community, and spiritual considerations and impacts.

Based on the data analysis, it was possible to offer suggestions of potential pitfalls, benefits, and other situations that could impact both the development and the continuation of this type of partnership. While the results are specific to this partnership in Chattanooga, the lessons learned could be transferred to other organizations.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS**

### **Overview**

This chapter presents the results of the data collection and analysis. Each of the research questions will be addressed, providing detailed information related to the perception of benefits by community members, ministry leaders, and World Changers leadership and staff. Each of these questions are broken down into the areas of logistical, community, and spiritual considerations and impacts. The final section offers other areas that respondents and document sources felt were important to supporting or impeding the success of potential partnerships such as the one World Changers has built with the city of Chattanooga. These include the first relationships to develop, communication, mediating expectations, organizational structure impacts, and cultural considerations.

### **Compilation Protocol and Measures**

As detailed in the previous chapter, qualitative data was gathered using open-ended question responses from a survey, interview transcripts, and documents related to World Changers and its presence in the Chattanooga community. All material was organized using MAXQDA software. The coding process was completed in stages, beginning with an initial round. This round allowed the researcher to determine specific areas of common responses which were then grouped into similar topics.

After all the data had been coded using this process, the researcher then carried out axial coding to seek connections and larger themes. This resulted in the data being organized in three overarching themes: Logistical Considerations and Impacts, Community Considerations and Impacts, and Spiritual Considerations and Impacts. The complete list of coding headings is found in Appendix I.

### **Demographic and Sample Data**

Data collection began with an invitation to complete a survey of open-ended questions provided using the SurveyMonkey website. From the responses received, 11 out of 18 were submitted complete. The respondents consisted of two community members, four ministry leaders (one of whom was also a community member), and five individuals involved in WC leadership roles (two of whom were also community members). The average of time involved with WC was 9.3 years, ranging from 1 year to 18 years. Respondents indicated a variety of involvement from the year 2004 to the present. The complete list of respondents is found in Appendix G. Three one-on-one interviews were conducted, recorded, and transcribed. The researcher also spent a day at the WC project in Chattanooga in July 2022. Notes from observations and conversations were included in the data as well.

Twenty-one articles as well as three letters and one breaking news segment from the Chattanooga Times Free Press were obtained through the newspaper's online archives. The date range was 2004 to the present. These proved valuable for further comments and reactions from community members and project participants. Another article was examined from the Chattanooga.com website, an online source of local breaking news. The researcher contacted news directors at the local network television stations to request archived video or transcript records. As a result, four documents, ranging from 2007 to 2022 were procured courtesy of the ABC and CBS affiliated stations in Chattanooga. Further online searching resulted in locating two government documents that related to the WC partnership in Chattanooga. The WC staff provided the survey results from youth leaders at the 2022 project. All this material was added to the MAXQDA files and coded using the same process as the survey data. A complete list of documents and media is found in Appendix H.

## **Data Analysis and Findings**

This section will detail the findings that emerged after the data analysis was completed. It will be organized according to the themes appearing in the data as well as the research questions guiding the study.

### **Themes Appearing in the Data**

As the coding process was completed, the data naturally collected into three main areas of interest. These were logistical considerations and impacts, community considerations and impacts, and spiritual considerations and impacts. Logistical topics included funding, local opportunities to assist with areas such as housing and food, benefits of returning to an area due to local knowledge, and staying in the city compared to going outside of it. Community topics involve a shared vision, benefits of returning to an area creating a continued presence, community relations (general as well as meeting the needs of the community), and local opportunities for involvement both for area churches and other organizations or businesses. Spiritual topics focused on putting faith into action and the noticed impact on participants. These three themes are addressed as they relate to Research Questions 1 through 3 with the final section addressing Research Question 4 and its focus on areas of concerns or pitfalls that could be avoided with planning.

### **Research Question 1: What, if any, benefits do members of the community perceive from long-term partnerships between the community and mission organizations that offer short-term student mission experiences?**

Data from community members was gathered through survey responses as well as document evaluation. A total of five respondents indicated that they were community members. Three of the five also identified themselves as ministry leaders or WC leadership. As a result, their responses will be considered under other headings.

### *Logistical Considerations and Impacts*

The logistics of planning for a project involving mission service by young people who travel to a location require considering different aspects of the work being done and how to provide for those coming to participate. Community members recognized that there are benefits to the partnership that help ensure the planning is adequate and provision is made to help the program be successful.

**Funding.** Community members perceived it is beneficial to establish a partnership to assist in funding repair projects. Respondent A stated that reaching out to those in the community to see if “they would be willing to give of their resources and help” can provide funds or materials to benefit the work being considered. Document resources indicated a benefit of the partnership for funding a total of 18 times. The data revealed that having community organizations involved in the partnership had a positive impact. Documents noted that community organizations were able to secure additional funding through government grants and other fundraising opportunities. This funding appeared to cover a large portion of the actual materials needed to complete home repairs. The amount of money provided for supplies was sometimes supplemented by local groups conducting fundraising. Local agencies such as East Ridge Revitalization, the Department of Neighborhood Services and Community Development, the Front Porch Alliance, Chattanooga Neighborhood Services, and the Department of Economic and Community Development were specifically mentioned. The implication is that the partnership allows the money spent on supplies to go farther since labor is not included in the costs. Table 8 summarizes the document analysis results.

**Table 8***Examples of Funding Considerations Attributed to Community Members in Document Sources*

Date	Source	Summary of Content Related to Funding
4/12/04	CTFP Article	City officials providing funding for supplies
6/18/04	CTFP Article	Neighborhood services administrator discusses a fund-raising luncheon to raise \$5,000 that will be added to \$35,000 gained from grants and cost-sharing; money will help cover dumpsters and other miscellaneous expenses, so homeowners don't pay anything for repairs
7/7/04 & 7/18/04	CTFP Articles	City offered a \$6,999 grant to neighborhood organizations where work occurred to be matched at \$3,510; city, businesses, and neighborhood organizations provide materials and funding
7/15/06	CTFP Article	Chattanooga Neighborhood Services paid for supplies
7/18/07	US Federal News Service Report	Funds for building materials and other supplies provided by Department of Neighborhood Services and Community Development as well as Front Porch Alliance
7/26/07	CTFP Article	Front Porch Alliance working with \$30,000 U.S. Dept. of HUD funding for materials as well as other donations to cover up to \$50,000 in materials
7/29/07	CTFP (BN)	Front Porch Alliance and Department of Neighborhood Services and Community Development paid for building supplies and other related materials
7/25/09	CTFP Article	According to Administrator of Department of Neighborhood Services, city will provide \$70,000 in materials and supplies
7/22/11	CTFP Article	East Ridge Revitalization and other local groups wanting to improve the look and image of the city paid for supplies for work on houses in their neighborhoods
7/11/12	WTVC Video Transcript	East Ridge Revitalization and the city of Chattanooga providing supplies; labor will be freely provided
7/18/13	CTFP Article	Funding for supplies provided by Chattanooga Department of Neighborhood Services and Community Development
7/17/14	CTFP Article	Supplies provided by the state Department of Economic and Community Development and the city
7/23/16	CTFP Article	City funds being used for projects
7/16/17	CTFP Article	Along with the Department of Economic and Community Development, the city provides paint, lumber, and other supplies
7/18/17	CTFP Article	City pays for paint, lumber, and other supplies
6/18/19	CTFP Article	Having the partnership to complete work helps the city stretch its resources
7/8/22	OCR RP	City plans to invest \$60,000 for home repairs, some going to WC partnership

**Local Opportunities for Local Churches.** This topic was only addressed by one survey respondent who was a community member, Respondent A. The individual mentioned that it is a benefit to get local churches involved due to needing their assistance to host the extra people who come to participate in WC. Specifically mentioned was the willingness of Brainerd Baptist to give up their church to benefit the community. The survey response also stated that the long-term partnership with WC in the community allows local churches “the ability to assist in missions where they live” (Respondent A).

**Local Opportunities to Assist with Housing and/or Food.** Ten specific references to local opportunities to assist with housing and feeding the WC participants were noted by community members in documents and survey results. Implied benefits were the ability to ensure participants had the necessary provisions for their stay. Respondent A specifically mentions the role that Brainerd Baptist Church has played in hosting the WC attendees. The individual wrote, “I think especially of Brainerd Baptist who has hosted world changers for all of these years...church members provide meals for hundreds of participants each morning and night” (Respondent A).

Another benefit is positive publicity for area businesses and organizations who assisted. Restaurants, other businesses, or local groups were sometimes specifically mentioned by community members and publicly thanked for their donations of food and shelter. The long-term partnership allows businesses to participate year after year, contributing to the work being done by hundreds of participants each year. This indirectly gives back to the community since the participants are working to improve neighborhoods where the churches and businesses exist. Table 9 offers a summary of findings sourced from documents that support the benefit provided to local churches and businesses that support WC volunteers.

**Table 9***Examples of Assisting with Housing and/or Food Attributed to Community Members in Document Sources*

Date	Source	Summary of Content Related to Housing and/or Food
7/18/04	CTFP Article	Recognizes area churches for providing food
7/18/07	US Federal News Service Report	Recognizes Brainerd Baptist Church providing lodging and other local churches and community groups providing meals and water
7/29/07	CTFP (BN)	Recognizes that WC volunteers/participants stayed at Brainerd Baptist Church
7/15/08	SBGTV Transcript	Recognizes that churches are hosting 500 students
7/25/09	CTFP Article	Recognizes Brainerd Baptist Church for providing housing and local Baptist congregations providing food at work sites for participants
8/19/12	CTFP Article	Specifically names and thanks local businesses who fed participants
7/28/13	CTFP Article	Specifically names and thanks Chick-Fil-A for feeding WC young people for two weeks
7/28/13	CTFP Letter	Specifically names and thanks businesses that helped feed WC participants, noting the communities and neighborhoods involved
7/23/16	CTFP Article	Recognizes Brainerd Baptist Church for lodging participants and providing breakfast and dinner each day (with help of 40 local volunteers)
7/7/17	CTFP Article	Recognizes that Brainerd Baptist “will continue its long tradition of providing lodging and meals”

**Benefits of Returning to an Area Due to Local Knowledge.** The only data that reflected benefits to returning to an area due to local knowledge was the survey response from Respondent A. It was stated that it is “good to have people who know the area that can tell them the best places to take their churches during their visit.” In addition, the response suggested that having locals involved provides resources to make sure groups coming to participate have what they need, even if it something as basic as directions to Walmart. Respondent A also noted that locals being involved over time allows them to recognize what situations may arise that group leaders will need assistance to address. That knowledge can facilitate better preparation to accommodate those coming to participate in the project.

**Staying in the City Compared to Going Outside of It.** Only one community member response reflected the benefit of moving beyond the city itself into the surrounding area. Respondent H suggested that it would be beneficial to those who lived outside the actual city if WC were able to consider the rural communities of the area. The respondent noted that resources

are more limited in these rural communities, so it would be a benefit for WC to aid in home repairs.

**Backup Plans.** There were two examples mentioned related to the importance of having backup plans. Respondent A suggested that “we have seen how fast plans can fall through,” giving the example of a church offering to feed a crew and failing to fulfill their commitment, so it is important to establish good communication among the partners. In the news story from WTVC on July 11, 2012, the reporter talks about how weather impacted the work being done. However, even though the crews appeared disappointed for the moment, they were ready to get back to work as soon as the weather cleared. A benefit of the continued partnership is developing plans to deal with situations such as these.

### ***Community Considerations and Impacts***

Community members noted there were benefits impacting the community itself through the creation and maintenance of a long-term partnership with WC. As a result of having a long-term partnership, all members developed a shared mission to serve the community. Creating a continued presence as a benefit of returning year after year was also suggested as a positive aspect of the partnership. Community relations, both in general terms as well as through meeting the needs of the community, was seen as a benefit created through a long-term relationship with the community. Finally, it was noted that another key benefit deriving from the long-term partnership with WC was that local churches, businesses, and other organizations had more opportunities for community service each summer.

**A Shared Mission.** During analysis, there were eight specific references that relate to the concept of a shared mission provided by community members in document sources. The consensus was that the partnership assists the city in addressing the needs of its residents and

improving neighborhoods. The city is noted to have a desire to help the less fortunate, and community members see working with WC as a means to accomplish this task. It was also mentioned that the partnership and the project each year offers an opportunity to bring people together from different parts of the area in addition to those who come through WC to serve. Respondent A describes how WC and its work each year “brings so many people together from all over the country and even those who are already in Chattanooga.” Table 10 provides a summary of relevant references in document sources related to community members’ perceived benefits of a shared mission for the partnership.

**Table 10**

*Examples of a Shared Mission Attributed to Community Members in Document Sources*

Date	Source	Summary of Content Related to Having a Shared Mission
7/18/04	CTFP Article	Community leader is quoted saying, “Improving neighborhoods is our job. They share our mission” while talking about WC’s continued presence in Chattanooga
2/1/08	CTFP Article	States that the area residents have a history of helping those who are less fortunate
7/15/08	SBGTV Transcript	Reporter states that the WC team is “making changes for people who can’t afford to make them or can’t physically do the work”
9/23/11	CTFP Article	References the Annual Performance Evaluation Report filed for HUD funding; report mentions that WC assisted in completing 290 home renovations in 2009-2010 (along with other local organizations)  WC is mentioned as a way to assist the “city’s efforts to address housing needs”
7/7/17	CTFP Article	WC is credited with helping 35 owner-occupied homes remain habitable by helping “preserve existing homes for low-income families”  The mayor asserts that the city has a mindset of helping, and WC plays a role in “ensuring dozens of Chattanooga families can live in their homes for years to come”
7/18/17	CTFP Article	Mentions how WC works with the Department of Economic and Community Development to identify the needs of homeowners and determine which projects to undertake

**Benefits of Returning: A Continuing Presence.** There were two examples of a continuing presence mentioned by a community member as a benefit of WC returning to the Chattanooga area year after year. Respondent A stated, “relationships have already been made

and partnerships have already been established.” This was the benefit noted from continuing to work with the city over the long-term. Respondent H offered that he or she believes “there are benefits to continuing to work in the same communities” although no specific examples were provided.

**Benefits for Community Relations in General.** The benefits for community relations were grouped into two areas. The first is benefits to the local organizations with which the WC partnership works. There were four references related to this topic. The other area is benefits to the homeowners and their communities. This was evidenced ten times during analysis of community information resources as well as by Respondent H who suggested that the presence of WC has a great impact on the community but did not go into detail about what the impact is. Table 11 provides a summary of the information gathered from the document sources related to benefits to local organizations while Table 12 describes benefits to the homeowners and neighborhoods as perceived by community members.

**Table 11**

*Examples of General Community Relations (Benefits to Local Organizations) Attributed to Community Members in Document Sources*

Date	Source	Summary of Content Related to Benefits to Local Organizations
2/1/08	CTFP Article	Discusses the applications available for inclusion in WC through its partnerships with the Front Porch Alliance and the Office of Faith-Based and Community Partnerships
7/22/13	CTFP Article	Highlights that 340 students participating in WC helped distribute food for Meals on Wheels
7/7/17	CTFP Article	Mentions the partnership between WC and the Summer Home Repair Program managed by the Department of Economic and Community Development
6/18/19	CTFP Article	Mentions that the Minor Home Repair Program in the city assists in identifying houses to be fixed by WC

**Table 12**

*Examples of General Community Relations (Benefits to Homeowners/Neighborhoods) Attributed to Community Members in Document Sources*

Date	Source	Summary of Content Related to Benefits to Homeowners/Neighborhoods
7/18/04	CTFP Article	Resident is quoted, “amazing to see how dedicated they are”
7/26/07	CTFP Article	Homeowner is quoted, “work they’re doing makes me feel really good because it is something that I could not do on my own”; Councilman also mentions how thankful those who receive help are
7/13/10	SBGTV Transcript	Homeowner is quoted, “It means I’m blessed! It means, I love it!”
7/11/12	WTVC Video/Transcript	Son of homeowner is quoted, “tells us she’s ecstatic over the free labor she’s now receiving” and mentioned she called excited and telling him to come over
7/18/13	CTFP Article	Homeowner is quoted, “I think it’s a wonderful program. I’m very glad they’re here.”
7/28/13	CTFP Article	Mentions how WC young people “take part in community building and spiritual programs
7/17/14	CTFP Article	Neighbor of a homeowner receiving work is quoted, “Y’all are making my hood look good!”
7/23/16	CTFP Article	Mentions that neighbors come by to ask about the work and chat with the WC volunteers
7/16/17	CTFP Article	Granddaughter of homeowner is quoted, “This is awesome, having these lovely young people helping us out.”
6/18/19	CTFP Article	Mayor is quoted, “We know we have people in need, and we know our neighborhoods are stronger when we address these problems;” also mentions how volunteers’ work makes a difference to individual homes but then spreads to the whole neighborhood as they fix problems that impact “everyone on that street”

### **Benefits for Community Relations: Meeting the Needs of the Community.**

Community members offered many examples of how the World Changers partnership benefits the Chattanooga area through meeting the needs of the community. Respondent H suggested that by meeting the needs of homeowners, students are offered insight into the daily struggles of local senior citizens and how those needs can be met. Coding of document sources resulted in 23 instances of community needs being met through the work done over the years of the partnership. One of the most frequent suggested benefits was how homes were able to be

protected and repaired. In a July 7, 2017 article from the Chattanooga Times Free Press, the administrator of the Department of Economic and Community Development is quoted “We are protecting 35 owner-occupied homes in our community to ensure these families are able to continue living in their homes more safely and comfortably without severe code violations” (Chattanooga Times Free Press, July 7, 2017). In a July 18, 2007 release from U.S. Federal News Service, the administrator of Neighborhood Services and Community Development provides information about the work of World Changers. It is described as an opportunity to “provide free home repair to qualifying homeowners in low to moderate income neighborhoods. Projects include painting, roofing, porch repair, construction of handicap ramps and more” (U.S. Federal News Service; July 18, 2007).

Working with other community groups to increase the service opportunities also allows WC to meet community needs. One of these outreaches involved having youth groups go out with Meals on Wheels staff to deliver food to area residents. Participant H noted that during the years of this partnership, “delivering meals was only a small part of the service provided.” Table 13 includes other references of community members describing how community needs are being met through the partnership’s continued work in Chattanooga.

**Table 13***Examples of Community Relations: Meeting the Needs of the Community Attributed to Community Members in Document Sources*

Date	Source	Summary of Content Related to Meeting the Needs of the Community
4/12/04	CTFP Article	WC is recognized as helping bring homes up to code and offering minor home repairs to elderly, disabled, and financially stressed residents
6/18/04	CTFP Article	Alton Park neighborhood residents “want assistance to make sure their homes are up to code” and meet building standards to measure up to new homes being built in the area WC worked to screen the porch and paint the house; resident states, “I’ve wanted this done for so long”
7/7/04	CTFP Article	WC is working to “make home repairs for elderly and disabled people in Chattanooga;”  One resident says it answers prayers as they paint, replace faucets and rotting wood, and clean her yard
7/18/04	CTFP Article	Article describes the work being done as “making home repairs for nearly 50 low income, disabled and elderly residents.”
7/26/05	CTFP Article	WC can “do repairs for elderly, disabled, and others who are unable to do for themselves”
7/15/06	CTFP Article	A homeowner whose house is being painted says, “It’s a wonderful thing,” and mentions she will now be able to invite friends over and enjoy her home
7/26/07	CTFP Article	Reports 33 crews working; One homeowner cannot afford to fix rotting roof and gutters, but it is being done for her
7/29/07	CTFP (BN)	The mayor recognizes WC for offering “much needed repair work for many elderly and deserving residents of Chattanooga”
7/25/09	CTFP Article	Interview with homeowner who has lived in house 46 years; WC volunteers fixing roof will allow her “to stay a little longer”
7/22/10	CTFP Article	A homeowner becomes choked up describing the work done: “It really fills me up with grace and mercy” as she received “much needed and greatly appreciated touchups” A neighborhood program specialist says that homeowners “are in great need of having these repairs done”
7/22/11	CTFP Article	65-year-old house that was described as dilapidated: WC redid the roof, built a wheelchair ramp, and filled cracks in stucco walls Work was done on 12 houses including four wheelchair ramps, removing poison ivy from walls, and much-needed lawn work
8/19/12	CTFP Article	Mentions that the work done has improved the lives and homes for two families
7/18/13	CTFP Article	House has dangerous deck that is being replaced along with new doors, steps repaired, and painting: Homeowner states, “I think it’s a wonderful program. I’m very glad they’re here.”
7/28/13	CTFP (BN)	WC will be providing the labor to “work on elderly or disabled people’s homes for no charge”
7/17/14	CTFP Article	One resident, age 78, describes how she is now able to roll her wheelchair down the ramp built by WC rather than struggle with a walker on stairs; she says, “World Changers came to the rescue”
7/16/17	CTFP Article	“15 projects for the needy, disabled and elderly families across the city” were being completed in week one with another 20 projects lined up for week two
7/18/17	CTFP Article	WC can “make repairs on the homes of people who wouldn’t be able to afford them otherwise. Those who are elderly, poor, or disabled often struggle to have food and medicine
6/18/19	CTFP Article	A councilman mentions that as WC works to “repair and repaint other houses in low-income neighborhoods” it will “help a lot of low-income persons”
7/8/22	OCRPP	States that a key output of the program is home repairs being completed

**Local Opportunities for Involvement.** Local opportunities for involvement were perceived in various ways by community members. Some of these were previously included in the section related to helping to feed or house WC participants as well as funding sources. Respondent A mentioned involvement five times in the survey responses. The first instance was describing how a local market was utilized to get watermelons “because it helped both groups of people and ultimately strengthened the community” (Respondent A). This individual’s responses also noted that local police were involved by helping to patrol the areas where work crews were assigned, and Disaster Relief provides shower trailers each year. This participant suggested that relationships with local businesses and organizations are beneficial year after year and specifically mentioned how a local company supplied ice cream and a community center allowed use of its space. Finally, it was offered that it “gives the city an opportunity to get involved in helping their neighbors” (Respondent A).

The coding process determined 14 additional references by community members related to how local entities were involved with the partnership. In some cases, businesses were mentioned by name, providing positive publicity. Table 14 provides examples of those references.

**Table 14***Examples of Local Opportunities for Involvement Attributed to Community Members in Document Sources*

Date	Source	Summary of Content Related to Local Opportunities for Involvement
4/12/04	CTFP Article	Local businesses asked to donate; one building supply owner requested a list of needed supplies to enable his store to donate
7/7/04	CTFP Article	Refers to companies donating materials
7/26/05	CTFP Letter	Businesses are thanked for donating money, food, and materials in a letter written by a community member
7/26/07	CTFP Article	The Neighborhood Services and Community Development group as well as Front Porch Alliance partner with the project
		The director of the Front Porch Alliance mentions the importance of including more local neighborhood and church groups to assist
7/22/10	CTFP Article	States that WC has “teamed up with the Chattanooga Department of Neighborhood and Community Development to lend a hand to community members”
8/19/12	CTFP Letter	Community member lists local businesses that assisted with food and other donations for WC workers
7/22/13	CTFP Article	Local churches donated food to Meals on Wheels to be distributed by WC participants
7/28/13	CTFP Article	A local business is specifically named and thanked for assisting with feeding crews for two of the projects
7/28/13	CTFP Letter	A letter thanks and specifically names businesses that provided supplies to aid the community member and her group in feeding a work crew throughout the week
8/14/14	CTFP Letter	Appreciation is expressed to businesses that assisted during the project and lists specific names
7/23/16	CTFP Article	Mentions the continued work with Meals on Wheels to distribute food to seniors one night during the week
7/16/17	CTFP Article	References the partnership with the Department of Economic and Community Development
6/18/19	CTFP Article	A local bank and church are specifically named for having donated to fund materials and equipment

*Spiritual Considerations and Impacts*

There were two topics related to spiritual considerations and impacts that stood out during the coding process. The first is the impact that taking part in WC had on the individuals who participated. The second is the theme of putting faith into action. This section will summarize the data that reflects the benefits perceived by community members related to those two areas.

**Impact on Participants.** Analysis of the resources provided three examples of community members reflections about the benefits gained by participants of the WC project. The first example was found in the Chattanooga Times Free Press article from June 16, 2004. A community member states, “For the kids who come and do it, the experience is a great blessing” (Chattanooga Times Free Press; July 16, 2004). Another example refers to the impact of seeing the homeowners overcome by what is being done for them. This is found in the Chattanooga Times Free Press article from July 18, 2017 and mentions, “Their incredulity at what is being done for them, and their thanks for it, has moved many a World Changers volunteer to tears” (Chattanooga Times Free Press; July 18, 2017). The final example, in the Chattanooga Times Free Press article from June 18, 2019, quotes a local councilman. He says that the experience is “providing a great opportunity for these kids to learn about other people and what they can do working as a team” (Chattanooga Times Free Press; June 18, 2019).

**Faith in Action.** Since World Changers is a Christian-based ministry, the opportunity for students and leaders to put faith into action plays an important role as discussed previously in this paper. There were eight instances of community members offering this concept as a benefit of the partnership and the work being done. In the transcript for an SBGTV news report dated July 23, 2007, the reporter mentions that “The goals for World Changers are to share the love of Christ and give students a practical way of showing God’s love to people” (SBGTV; July 23, 2007). Respondent H echoed this idea, saying, “youth need more opportunities like this so they learn to give back.”

Another example from the Chattanooga Times Free Press was found in a letter written by a community member on July 26, 2005. This individual thanks World

Changers and the work being done, adding, “They don’t preach or proselytize. They show their faith with good works,” and that “World Changers is a true demonstration of the teaching of Christ” (Chattanooga Times Free Press; July 26, 2005). Table 15 describes other examples of community members perceptions of faith in action found in documents.

**Table 15**

*Examples of Opportunities to Put Faith in Action Attributed to Community Members in Document Sources*

Date	Source	Summary of Faith in Action Opportunities
7/18/04	CTFP Article	Homeowner describing the work done to her house “And they did it with a smile”
7/15/08	SBGTV Transcript	Community member says, in reference to the students, they have “A lot of faith and confidence in them to see that they have this kind of core values willing to be involved in a project like this”
7/28/13	CTFP Article	States that the youth involved were able to “love some people in our community”
7/17/14	CTFP Article	World Changers is described as “doing acts of kindness throughout the city”
7/23/16	CTFP Article	Participants are said to have “learned how to give of themselves to others”

***Summary***

The survey responses and document source analysis indicated that community members perceive some benefits to the long-term partnership in place between WC and Chattanooga. The impact on the local community and meeting the needs of the residents as their homes are repaired was documented. Another key area of positive impact was the ability for local churches and businesses to become involved by supplying food, building materials, or other supplies needed throughout the project weeks. In particular, the document sources reflected the many community organizations that have been involved in securing funding and determining work to complete, suggesting that the city and its neighborhood groups share a mission with WC to improve the lives of residents.

**Research Question 2: What, if any, benefits do ministry leaders, both local to the community and those who have worked as participants, perceive from long-term partnerships between the community and mission organizations that offer short-term student mission experiences?**

Data from ministry leaders was gathered through survey responses as well as document evaluation. Three respondents indicated they were associated with the partnership as ministry leaders who have brought students. One respondent was a local ministry leader in the Chattanooga area. While they noted benefits in the areas of logistics and community, they provided more information related to the spiritual benefits of participating in the project which will be discussed later in this section. There were also references to ministry leaders in some of the document sources analyzed.

***Logistical Considerations and Impacts***

Analysis of responses from surveys as well as documents demonstrated that ministry leaders perceive benefits of the continued partnership between WC and the Chattanooga community related to logistics. Topics included were funding, local opportunities for local churches, local opportunities to assist with housing and/or food, benefits of returning to an area due to local knowledge, and having backup plans.

**Funding.** Two examples of benefits to funding were noted by ministry leaders. Respondent K noted that the partnership impacts finances, although details were not provided as to how this occurs. Respondent J stated that the partnership helps “agencies stretch their budgets farther by eliminating some of the labor costs that eat into supply funds.”

**Local Opportunities for Local Churches.** Ministry leaders offered two examples of local churches having opportunities to assist with the partnership. Respondent E stated that local ministries must “step up and do a little more for the mission participants, but it is all part of service to God and others,” thus providing the benefit of ministry opportunities. Respondent J

saw the benefit to the local church as the opportunity to help provide lunches and housing which offers a chance to minister and “be part of the bigger picture of the project.”

**Local Opportunities to Assist with Housing and/or Food.** The data revealed four examples indicating how local groups had opportunity to assist with housing and food for WC participants. The article dated July 17, 2017 from the Chattanooga Times Free Press quotes a local church facilities manager, “We provide a place to sleep in our Sunday School classrooms and feed them breakfast and dinner” (Chattanooga Times Free Press; July 17, 2017). He also mentioned how the church allows the over 300 participants to use their facility for worship and meetings while other churches offer shower trailers for them to use.

Another Chattanooga Times Free Press article from July 15, 2006 offers insight from a local minister of music. This individual mentioned that there were 21 local churches providing volunteers who fed the WC participants each day. He also referred to housing being provided by Brainerd Baptist Church. Respondent J noted that a benefit of the partnership is the ability to have local groups assist with housing, food, and showers to offer this kind of experience for students.

The WC evaluation document (see Appendix J) contained categories related to food and housing. This evaluation was completed by ministry leaders who brought students to the Chattanooga project in 2022. The food was rated an average of 4.2/5 with the timeliness of meals rating an average of 5/5. Leaders were also asked if they thought the same sources should be used again, which averaged 4.83/5. Lodging was rated an average of 4.6/5, with an average score of 5/5 when asked about using the same facility again.

**Benefits of Returning to an Area Due to Local Knowledge.** There was only one reference to the benefits of returning to an area due to availability of local knowledge.

This came from Respondent K who noted that site organization is improved when local people are involved who are more familiar with the area and available resources.

**Backup Plans.** Respondent J indicated that having backup plans would be beneficial. This individual saw having a long-term partnership as a positive since plans may need to be adjusted from what has been in place for a while. Having input from all the parties involved could make that process run more smoothly.

### ***Community Considerations and Impacts***

While ministry leaders did not focus as much on the community considerations and impacts as community members did, they still suggested benefits of the partnership in this area. One overall theme to the responses was that the partnership allowed multiple groups to work together to provide consistency.

**A Shared Mission.** Two survey responses indicated a partnership is benefitted when the involved organizations have a shared mission. Respondent E responded that “projects, discussions, and involvement are done with respect to everyone’s concerns.” According to Respondent J, in order to ensure important considerations are adequately addressed, the partnership “needs to have governing bodies and other groups “on board” to ensure needs are being met” so that everyone is working for the same goals.

**Benefits of Returning: A Continuing Presence.** One of the benefits of returning to a location over a period of time is having a continuing presence. Survey respondents reflected this theme four times in their responses with Respondents E and J both mentioning this topic multiple times. Table 16 summarizes the instances found in survey responses.

**Table 16***Examples of Benefits of Returning: A Continuing Presence Attributed to Ministry Leaders According to Survey Responses*

Source	Summary of Benefits of Returning by Maintaining a Continuing Presence
Participant E	States the partnership can “have infrastructure in place and have a good relationship within their service community”  Those involved, particularly the mission organization, can establish a solid reputation that will continue to grow as the partnership continues over the years
Participant J	Continued presence “provides consistency that gives credibility to the work being done”  Stated “partnership that lasts over multiple years is beneficial because it gives all involved parties a chance to learn and plan together”

**Benefits for Community Relations in General.** Ministry leaders did reflect on benefits for community relations in general due to the long-term partnership’s presence in the Chattanooga area. Four responses were coded under this topic. The first was from the Chattanooga Times Free Press article dated July 18, 2004. In this document, a local pastor noted that WC had committed to be in the area for the next five years, demonstrating a willingness to work in the community over a period of time. Respondent K stated that there is a benefit of “community engagement” due to the continued work in Chattanooga. Respondent J suggested that as the community and mission partners work together over time, the process can be refined and run more smoothly. This individual also saw a benefit in helping community organizations make more impact with their resources due to sharing the work with the other partner groups.

**Benefits for Community Relations: Meeting the Needs of the Community.** Survey data and document analysis revealed four examples of ministry leaders recognizing meeting the needs of the community as a benefit to the WC partnership in Chattanooga. In a Chattanooga Times Free Press article dated July 26, 2007, a youth leader who brought students to the project was quoted, “We want to leave this yard and this house better than we found it” (Chattanooga

Times Free Press; July 26, 2007). Respondent E stated that “working to help people and better lives is a great benefit.”

Respondents G and J also noted that meeting community needs was beneficial. Respondent G implied that the work being done was helping those in the community and responded that the WC participants “love to see the people satisfied when we are done.” Respondent J also mentioned the work being done benefitting homeowners who would get repairs they may not be able to afford on their own.

**Local Opportunities for Involvement.** Ministry leaders mentioned local opportunities for involvement seven times. One of the areas of involvement is in assisting with supplies. Respondent J responded that having the support of local groups to provide resources and supplies is a benefit because it can offset costs. Another benefit, as reflected in the response of Respondent E, is partnering with local organizations to offer other opportunities to help the community. The specific group mentioned was Meals on Wheels, which partnered with WC and local churches to provide and deliver food to elderly residents.

Local groups could also be involved with planning to provide for the needs of the WC participants during their project week. Respondent J noted that planning for things like housing, food, and work sites is less difficult when the local groups have already put resources in place. With local involvement, this respondent suggests that plans can be adapted and developed based on needs and what is available in the community. An article in the Chattanooga Times Free Press dated July 18, 2013 also mentioned how local groups and businesses were assisting with providing water and portable restrooms for the project.

Local churches have opportunity to be involved in logistics as previously discussed but also through ministry in the community. Respondent K mentioned that churches are given the chance to become ministry partners with WC and the community project. They also may gain ministry opportunities once WC leaves through a continued presence within the communities where work was done. Respondent J also saw these outreach opportunities in the neighborhood where students worked as a benefit.

### ***Spiritual Considerations and Impacts***

Ministry leaders offered many examples of how they feel the WC projects affect the spiritual welfare of participants. These are divided into two main areas of focus: a general impact on the participants and the opportunity to put faith into action.

**Impact on Participants.** Through analysis of survey responses from ministry leaders and documents, it was shown that many feel that taking part in the WC project results in a positive impact for the participants. Respondent K suggested that since WC handles a lot of the details, it allows youth leaders to have more time to build relationships with students. Continuing the positive benefit of WC handling much of the planning work, Respondent J mentioned that it was a blessing to have a “ready-made” mission experience that allowed groups to do things that would not be possible to arrange on their own. Another positive impact was a feeling of being blessed through service, implied by Respondent E, “We all were blessed from this experience,” which referenced assisting in the partnership with Meals on Wheels to deliver food to elderly shut-ins.

During document analysis, 14 documents reflected data related to the beneficial impact that participation has. Table 17 summarizes this information.

**Table 17***Examples of Impact on Participants Attributed to Ministry Leaders in Document Sources*

Date	Source	Summary of Impact on Participants
7/7/04	CTFP Article	Participants have the chance to learn to share what they have with others
7/18/04	CTFP Article	Positive experience of “knowing we helped somebody, not us, but through God’s strength”
7/23/07	SBGTV Transcript	Rewarding Teens get more than anticipated Lives of the participants are changed Participants learn patience, sometimes must do what they really don’t want to States that it has “been really, really rewarding”
7/26/07	CTFP Article	Participants get to bond with new friends while also sharing faith, become like a family Students could be doing other things but “don’t get the same feeling when it’s over”
7/15/08	SBGTV Transcript	Participants feel accomplished, enjoy getting to work together as a crew to “get it done”
7/13/10	SBGTV Transcript	Benefits of making new friends is mentioned
7/22/10	CTFP Article	The experience brings positive feelings such as pride, accomplishment, and joy from helping the community and “seeing us change those people’s lives”
7/22/11	CTFP Article	Leader is quoted, “It’s hard to be out here roofing houses, and we can have selfish thoughts,” she said while looking at a rail spike from another work site that was kept as a reminder of Jesus’ nails. “Then we look at this, and we see what he went through.”
7/11/12	WTVC Transcript	Seeing the struggles of the community members makes participants want to help and improve their situations
7/18/13	CTFP Article	Participants build relationships with others who believe and think like them. They also learn perseverance through construction work that may be unfamiliar to them.
7/17/14	CTFP Article	Students have the opportunity to give back and help the community
7/23/16	CTFP Article	Opportunity to talk about God with homeowners and people walking by (sharing the Gospel) Opportunity to meet new people
7/16/17	CTFP Article	Impact goes beyond just fixing houses: “God changes lives as we work for these people.” Get to spread the Gospel and share personal experiences Get to experience rejection at times (while trying to share) Become close and make new friends that can lead to life-time friendships
10/5/22	WC Survey Data	Average score of 4.3/5 in the area of “spiritual transformation as a result of participating”

**Faith in Action.** Ministry leaders referenced the spiritual benefits of participants putting faith in action in 11 document sources. Three of the survey responses from ministry leaders also included this concept. The most common themes were giving participants an opportunity to spread God’s Word by sharing the Gospel and serving others. Respondent E wrote about the reason youth leaders bring their students to the project, suggesting the purpose was giving students an opportunity of “going to serve others.” This was echoed by Respondent J who stated it was an “opportunity to put faith into practice and minister to others.” Helping students “know the bridge service can do to impact others for the gospel” was offered from Respondent K. Table 18 summarizes the information from the coding process of document sources that applies to the area of faith in action as an impact on participants.

**Table 18**

*Examples of the Benefit of Opportunities to Put Faith into Action Attributed to Ministry Leaders in Document Sources*

Date	Source	Summary of Benefits of Opportunities to Put Faith into Action
7/7/04	CTFP Article	Says that participants want to help others because of the blessing they have received; want to give to others from what they have themselves
7/17/04	CTFP Article	The project provides an opportunity to give back and help the community
7/23/07	SBGTV Transcript	Suggests project participants have a “mission to help others while spreading the word” and a way to serve like Jesus Get to spread the Word of Christ
7/26/07	CTFP Article	“Goal is to share their Christian faith through their actions”
7/25/09	CTFP Article	“Offering an example of what Christians are and what they do” Provides the opportunity to serve God and help people
7/13/10	SBGTV Transcript	Project participants do it “because it’s one of those things that God’s called me to do”
7/22/11	CTFP Article	Participants are encouraged to work as hard as they feel able to by leaders: “if you think you can work harder for your Lord, then pray and serve.”
7/11/12	WTVC Transcript	It is a “chance to come out here and spread the Lord’s word”
7/18/13	CTFP Transcript	Participants are able to: Help through the grace of God Show our love Spread the Word of God anyway possible
7/16/17	CTFP Article	They come to serve others Enjoy the work as well as helping and serving “any way I could” “Most important thing is getting to share the gospel”
6/18/19	CTFP Article	“Students get to see what they are capable of doing and how God can work in their lives”

***Summary***

Ministry leaders also suggested that there are many benefits to the long-term partnership that has been developed between WC and Chattanooga. While they noted some benefits in the area of logistical considerations and impacts, they offered more perceived benefits in the area of community considerations and impacts. The area they felt had the greatest positive impact according to their responses and document analysis

was spiritual considerations and impacts. There were many references to opportunities for service and putting faith into action. It was also mentioned that students were provided with experiences to learn how helping others could be rewarding.

**Research Question 3: What, if any, benefits do leaders and staff of mission organizations offering short-term student mission experiences perceive from long-term partnerships with communities?**

To collect data related to the leaders and staff of the mission organization, the researcher utilized survey responses from five individuals and conducted personal interviews with two national staff members and one former student summer staff member. In addition, documents were analyzed and coded for information relevant to the research question. The researcher also spent a day riding along with a local coordinator during the WC project week in July 2022, and notes from that experience were analyzed as well.

***Logistical Considerations and Impacts***

Logistical considerations take into account areas related to funding, opportunities for local assistance such as assisting with housing and food for participants, the benefits of returning to the same location due to local knowledge, and the potential to go outside the city to broaden the mission field.

**Funding.** The benefits of a long-term partnership for funding the mission work being done were referenced in two out of the three interviews as well as during the ride-along. Four of the five survey respondents also noted funding considerations as beneficial. According to Respondent C, since 2004, the WC projects have provided over 300,000 volunteer hours. Using the national value for volunteer hours, “you come up with a gift in kind to the city of Chattanooga of over 5.97 million dollars.” There was one

reference by a WC staff member in a document source other than interview transcripts. This was from an article in the Chattanooga Times Free Press dated July 25, 2009. The local WC communications coordinator mentioned that the Southern Baptist Convention and the Department of Neighborhood Services and Community Development worked together to supply materials for the project. Table 19 summarizes the data related to funding attributed to WC staff and leaders in survey responses and interviews.

**Table 19**

*Examples of Funding Considerations Attributed to WC Staff and Leaders Gathered from Interviews and Surveys*

Source	Summary of Funding Considerations
Respondent B	Worksites are funded locally; WC provides the labor
Respondent C	Partnership planning allows everyone to know exactly what the budget is Partnering agencies that provide funding may also help identify and determine which houses are repaired
Respondent F	Budget cuts can be considered by local government since they know the labor for the work will be provided for free
Respondent I	Allows budget funds of Chattanooga Neighborhood Services to be stretched since labor is free
Respondent L	Communities have sources of funds for neighborhood improvement Funds may come from government agencies, churches, or private organizations in the area Money goes further since only have to pay for supplies and not labor costs
Respondent M	The long-time presence of WC helped with finding new sources of funding when the pandemic interfered with the county providing money in the budget
Respondent N	When there is funding support, it can prevent decisions being forced from a limited finances perspective; instead, the ministry priority can be the focus

**Local Opportunities for Local Churches.** Staff and leaders for WC related three opportunities for local churches. Respondent L suggested that when the local churches are seen assisting with various aspects of the project and showing support, it is an opportunity to bolster their reputations within their communities. Respondent C also saw the opportunity for the churches to interact with the homeowner(s). This occurred as the church sent people to the job

site each day to provide food for the work crew. Once that interaction occurs, Respondent C viewed it as opening a door to follow-up with the homeowner(s) once WC leaves. Finally, during the ride-along, Respondent M suggested that churches were able to provide funding and helped locate houses to repair. This enabled WC to continue its work after the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the project, resulting in the county cutting funding. Local churches were able to step in to determine a house for repair and provide the supplies and other needs for the work crew as well as feeding the participants.

**Local Opportunities to Assist with Housing and/or Food.** The opportunities for local organizations to assist with housing and food for the participants was referenced in two of the interviews as well as one of the documents. Two survey respondents also mentioned the benefit of having local groups provide help in this area. In the article from the Chattanooga Times Dispatch dated July 23, 2016, the WC associational coordinator refers to having 24 local churches that coordinated lunch for over 600 WC participants during the two weeks they were in Chattanooga. Respondent C mentioned having a network of churches and businesses that were able to help feed the work crews. Local churches being enlisted to provide lunches was a positive according to Survey Participant I.

During the interview with Respondent O on September 9, 2022, it was discussed how important it is to find a facility for lodging. This individual also noted that local churches make a commitment when they volunteer to feed the crews, and the bigger the project becomes, the more support is needed locally. It was suggested that local leaders and church associations were important to finding this support and enabling connections between groups to be made.

In the interview on August 24, 2022, Respondent N offered that lodging is one of the two hardest things to acquire to ensure success (the other being finances). A benefit to the partnership

is finding a local church or school facility that can be used each year. If a local church agrees to provide housing, considerations must be made for how it might impact their own activities such as Sunday services or small groups.

**Benefits of Returning to an Area Due to Local Knowledge.** The benefits of returning due to having people who are familiar with the area (local knowledge) were mentioned in all three interviews. Respondent L offered that it is beneficial to talk to local people who are involved with the agencies who may be willing to join the partnership as well as those involved in lodging to see what is involved and how the partnership can develop to make the most impact. Respondent O referred to partnering with a specific church in a distinctive area of the city. In this case, having the church involved “got us into that community a lot better.”

Respondent N noted that having locals involved can be useful when “blind spots” arise that may not have been considered. These people can help get the right resources to remedy problems or situations that may catch participants off-guard. It is helpful to have locals in leadership roles since they know how to get around the area and are more familiar with neighborhood dynamics. Finally, this staff member stated that it “definitely benefitted us a lot to have project managers from or near the area.” Respondent I noted that, “tension disappears as construction volunteers become more adept at choosing the scope of the work to allow work to be completed in 4 or 4 ½ days.” Choosing the appropriate projects will lead to more successful outcomes.

Another benefit of having local knowledge due to the continued presence is for church groups that decide to come back to the same project multiple times. According to Respondent N, this helps the youth leaders require less “mental capacity” since they already know how to get there. Having an idea of what to expect from previous trips to the same location provides

reference. Respondent N also suggested that leaders can focus on other things like relationships with their students since they “already had so many other stresses relieved” and are comfortable in the setting due to familiarity. Respondent C addressed this idea as well, saying, “youth groups will come back to minister in Chattanooga for a second or third time” due to the benefits of having the long-term partnership with the city and local ministry partners.

**Staying in the City Compared to Going Outside of It.** The data from WC staff and leaders did not demonstrate any notable benefits to working outside of the city in addition to staying in it. The SBGTV news story transcript from July 23, 2007 referred to information from WC staff that the crews were spread throughout the city and surrounding towns (suburbs). Crews were up to 20 miles apart, which spread them far throughout the Chattanooga area.

Respondent O discussed the complexity of needing to seek other funding sources outside of the city in order to accomplish this. Relationships would need to be built with additional neighborhood services groups. All of this would require working with more people and getting everyone focused on the same goals.

Respondent N gave several reasons as to why going outside the city could be complicated. The first was that the city center would have more resources such as transportation, health care, and ministry as well as people and volunteers available to assist in a successful project. Another concern was the transportation time to worksites which also could impact safety considerations. This individual mentioned that in case of an emergency or other situation that required assistance or WC leadership, it could take a longer period of time for someone to arrive on site to offer aid. It was also noted that it would be important to determine “what are your necessities and understanding, if you go outside of the city, people have lack of necessities.” There was one potential positive

mentioned, as Respondent N suggested there is usually less crime and people are generally more open when you reach out of the immediate city area.

**Backup Plans.** Having backup plans was viewed by WC staff and leaders as important, and having a long-term partnership played a role in putting these in place. Potential negative impacts of not having a plan if work was not completed were noted as well.

Respondent I recognized that it is important to work with local churches and associations to enhance the establishment of plans for logistics. A long-term partnership enables relationships to be built that will aid in providing the needed resources.

One area that was referenced multiple times was the importance of having plans and volunteers to complete work if it does not get finished. According to Respondent O, if houses weren't finished or had issues that needed repairs later, it is important to have volunteers who could go back to complete the work. Respondent I offered that tension may arise with the community leaders if work is left uncompleted, so it is necessary to have volunteers who are willing to work after the WC participants leave. Unfortunately, there is not always a well-executed plan to finish the work later according to Respondent B. Sometimes, there are "unexpected things that pop up that are going to influence the work getting done" according to Respondent O. However, as noted by Respondent N, backup plans such as having volunteers go in later to finish work may be in place but aren't necessarily shared with project participants.

### ***Community Considerations and Impacts***

As in the previous sections, the community considerations and impacts addressed by WC staff and leadership can be divided into subsections related to a shared mission,

benefits of a continuing presence and community relations, and local opportunities for involvement.

**A Shared Mission.** Data about the benefits of having a shared mission was obtained from two of the three interviews, two survey respondents, and an article from the Chattanooga Times Free Press. The article from the newspaper, dated June 16, 2004, mentions that the WC partnership creates a “win-win situation” for the community (Chattanooga Times Free Press; June 16, 2004). Table 20 summarizes the data gathered from interviews and surveys completed by WC staff and leaders.

**Table 20**

*Benefits of a Shared Mission According to Interviews and Surveys by WC Staff and Leaders*

Source	Summary of Responses Related to the Benefits of a Shared Mission
Respondent C	Long-term partnership ensures that even with “bumps along the way,” everyone continues to work side by side It is important that “everyone is on the same page” States there is “a common bond to help those in need that takes time to build”
Respondent I	Notes that each community is different with different goals and methods. Repeating projects in the same location helps meet each other’s needs and gives organizations a chance to “work within each other’s procedures”
Respondent N	Develop a mutual relationship between WC and the community Participants get to be part of the community while they are serving WC is there to serve the community The priority of mission should be serving the people of the community Encourages local people to be involved with service to the community even if they don’t know exactly what WC is
Respondent O	Selling points to local leaders: everybody wins As more local churches get involved, they are able to recommend more projects Having support from local leaders is important: “local leaders who were involved with the projects and who supported them”

**Benefits of Returning: A Continuing Presence.** Two central themes appeared in the results of WC staff and leaders’ responses about the benefits of a continuing presence. The first was the positive impact this has on local connections and arranging for the

project. The second was the benefit it offers to youth leaders who bring students to the project.

***Local Connections and Arrangements.*** During the ride-along on July 19, 2022, Respondent M noted that having served in leadership through the years, it improved the “ability to connect with those who helped in the past.” This makes it “easier to arrange housing, food, and projects.” Respondent O referred to the benefit of returning as relevant to local churches getting involved. It was suggested that after a few churches become involved, returning to the same area will allow them to draw in more church support. As a result of maintaining a presence in the community, it benefits coordination with multiple partners since it is not necessary to start from scratch each year as the process becomes more streamlined. The “establishment of plans for logistics is also enhanced,” according to Respondent I.

Respondent N suggested that past successes enable work to continue even in times when things may not be as successful in a particular year. It allows consistency in working with some of the same people which helps to build trust and confidence. Relationships can be established with smaller businesses in the community. There is also the benefit of being able to learn from mistakes and adapt during future projects rather than having to start fresh every year. The respondent also mentioned that, with long-term projects, those involved in planning can modify and adapt to the individual city’s needs and resources rather than trying a “cookie cutter approach” to ministry.

Improved logistics due to building relationships in the community was echoed by Respondent B. The long-term commitment of the partnership means “community leaders can learn to expect results and change through World Changers to better their community.” This individual also stated that “the longer a community is worked in, the larger and better the impact

in my opinion.” According to Respondent O, the “advantage of the long-term projects is just the relationships you build.” Respondent C noted that the impact of volunteer hours and the value calculated by national standards increases for every year that the project continues.

***Benefits for Youth Leaders Bringing Groups to the Project.*** Respondent C mentioned that youth groups often return to Chattanooga multiple times after attending WC there. This WC leader felt a reason for this was the benefit of having an established partnership and system in place. Respondent B agreed with this, stating, “long-term association will bring peace to youth leaders as they plan to bring their group. Having an established city and connection ensures a smooth week that has been logistically proven.” Both Respondent N and Respondent O agreed with this concept. Respondent N felt that it provides a comfortable setting for youth groups. Respondent O added that groups that return more than once have the opportunity to build relationships with local churches which may lead to more student impact.

**Benefits for Community Relations in General.** Each of the three interviews resulted in data that suggested there are benefits to community relations from maintaining a partnership. Respondent O mentioned that there is opportunity for positive publicity for local organizations. Partnering with local churches enabled the partnership to get into communities better, opening up other potential areas to do work. This individual also referenced the benefit of being able to identify local suppliers who will support the project. A story was told about one year when unexpected expenses arose for one of the jobs. A local building supplier willingly covered the cost of additional supplies needed. Respondent O also mentioned the impact of local groups on participants as they helped make it a good project. This made a greater impact on the students and made youth leaders want to return.

Respondent N agreed that the consistency of the project allows the building of rapport and relationships. There is also the opportunity to have an impact on local small businesses. This individual provided a story about a local donut shop that was used to provide breakfast for the WC participants at check-out. According to the respondent, WC has a tradition of trying to obtain Krispy Kreme donuts at the end of their projects when possible, and there were negative opinions about not having these. However, Respondent N discussed how utilizing a local small business made a great impact on the shop financially and through added publicity. Respondent L recognized that most areas in which WC works are glad to have a partnership that continues, “90-95% of our cities are thrilled and continue to ask us back.”

Data from survey responses and document sources also demonstrated benefits to a continued presence in the community. Tables 21 and 22 summarize these results.

**Table 21**

*Benefits of Community Relations in General Reflected by WC Staff and Leaders in Survey Responses*

Source	Summary of Benefits of Community Relations Reflected in Survey Responses
Respondent B	The community is impacted as physical needs are met that would otherwise not be addressed
Respondent C	Building personal relationships with city leaders makes a bigger impact. “Just this year when we lost funding from the city for the first time in our history, they were so distraught to have to tell us they had no money for us this year.”
Respondent D	“Neighbors of many of the applicants were very happy to see their fellow neighbors get some much-needed help.”
Respondent I	Partnerships in the community are “strengthened if the work is completed and is a good quality.”

**Table 22***Benefits of Community Relations in General Reflected by WC Staff and Leaders in Document Sources*

Date	Source	Summary of Benefits of Community Relations Reflected in Document Sources
4/12/04	CTFP Article	Director of volunteer mobilization is quoted “You see residents come alive, and it happens across racial, religious and socioeconomic lines.”
7/18/13	CTFP Article	Mentions how homeowners are kind and thankful for the work being done
7/23/16	CTFP Article	Partnering with local agencies such as Economic and Community Development Association to get names of those who qualify for repairs

Not all the responses indicated positive benefits. During the ride-along with Respondent M, there was mention of how even though WC had been in the community for a long time, local leadership changes had impacted the partnership. As changes were made, it led to some unfamiliarity with the program which required new relationships to be built in order to obtain adequate funding and other supplies. Respondent N discussed the potential of service becoming a source of accolades for those involved rather than WC’s purpose of serving as a reflection of Christ. The phrase “philanthropy versus ministry” was used to describe this.

**Benefits for Community Relations: Meeting the Needs of the Community.**

References to meeting the needs of the community by WC staff and leaders were found in three documents, one interview, and five survey responses. In the interview with Respondent L, the role of WC volunteers determining what projects are doable was mentioned. As a result of the volunteer work, it was stated, “if we go in and offer free labor, most of the time that at least doubles the value of whatever money they have.” The Chattanooga Times Free Press article from June 16, 2004 quotes the construction coordinator saying that WC “works to improve existing homes” rather than trying to build new ones from scratch (Chattanooga Times Free Press; June 16, 2004). The newspaper article from February 1, 2008 discusses how volunteers provide free repairs like painting, siding, and building handicap ramps to homeowners regardless of religious

affiliation. One of the WC coordinators is quoted in the Chattanooga Times Free Press article dated April 12, 2004 about the benefits homeowners receive from having a group of students working at their home for a week as they form bonds with one another: “A lot of residents are lonely, but they get tons of attention that week.”

The five survey responses all mentioned how WC can offer home repairs that might not otherwise have been possible. These are summarized in Table 23.

**Table 23**

*Meeting the Needs of the Community According to Survey Responses of WC Staff and Leaders*

Source	Summary of Survey Responses Related to Meeting the Needs of the Community
Respondent B	Major physical needs are met that couldn't have been otherwise; “provides services to families who can't afford to have the work done”
Respondent C	Volunteer hours provided since 2004 over 300,000
Respondent D	Homeowners are thankful for the city's relationship with WC since they “receive assistance through volunteer work that they wouldn't have been able to afford on their own”
Respondent F	WC provides free labor
Participant I	“Benefit for the residents is obvious”

**Local Opportunities for Involvement.** Staff and leaders of WC found benefits for local involvement through a long-term partnership. One of the areas of impact is the opportunity for local groups to become a part of the greater project. During the ride-along with Respondent M, the importance of using smaller local businesses such as a wholesale shop rather than national chains was mentioned and demonstrated. The researcher visited one such location to purchase additional materials needed to make sno-cones as a snack for participants. Respondent M had a previous relationship with this business and was given personal service and attention since the purchase was for WC. This demonstrated the benefit of repeated participation from local groups that WC staff found as a positive attribute.

Respondent N echoed this, suggesting that the long-term partnership offers small businesses, churches of all sizes, and people in the community a chance to be a part of the project. This was previously mentioned regarding using a local donut shop to purchase breakfast which benefitted the WC participants and the business. Respondent N felt that working with local businesses helps strengthen the relationship of the partnership. Respondent O stated that getting local support “is pretty important to how the projects go.” This was reiterated by mentioning local suppliers who continue to offer support in getting the necessary materials and supplies.

Respondent I noted that having local groups become involved expands the “mission to include community leaders, residents, participants, and local volunteers” in making a difference in the community itself. Respondent M, who offered the ride-along experience, felt that the familiarity and repeat participation that results from a long-term partnership makes it easier to coordinate with multiple partners.

Local churches’ involvement is also beneficial as they assist in providing housing and food for participants as well as locating homes for repair according to Respondent O. Respondent L suggested this was a way for local churches to bolster their reputation in the community as well as to build relationships with homeowners for continued ministry. Respondent C mentioned the importance of churches helping to feed crews which also allowed interaction with the homeowners. This can lead to follow-up after WC leaves. The survey response provided an example of how some churches have stepped in to assist with other needs such as purchasing appliances. Finally, Participant M discussed (during the ride-along on July 19, 2022) how important local church connections can be for funding. When the local

government cut the budget for WC due to not having the project during the pandemic, local churches offered to fund work sites so WC could continue its work in Chattanooga.

### ***Spiritual Considerations and Impacts***

The staff and leaders of WC who participated in the research suggested that there were spiritual benefits for individuals who take part in the WC project in Chattanooga. This data was organized into two themes: impact on participants and faith in action.

**Impact on Participants.** The impacts on participants contained themes of understanding people's needs, demonstrating God in their lives, having a sense of accomplishment, challenging the participants, and offering a ministry opportunity for youth leaders. Table 24 summarizes the data provided from all three interviews, two newspaper articles, and three survey responders.

**Table 24**

*Impacts on Participants as Reflected by WC Staff and Leaders in Interviews, Survey Responses, and Document Sources*

Date	Source	Summary of Data Related to Impacts on Participants
4/12/04	CTFP Article	Noted there is a “bond that forms between students and homeowners”
7/23/07	CTFP Article	States that what “kids come away with is an understanding of the need that people have all around them” and staff member feels it’s rewarding
7/18/22	Respondent L	Remarked that their group had not seen life changing moments with other youth ministry events as consistently as with WC
8/24/22	Respondent N	“Showing the consistency of God in our lives and how God can consistently be in their lives” When things get uncomfortable, participants learn to rely on God more Opportunities to learn about God
9/8/22	Respondent O	Local association and churches can impact in such a positive way that groups want to come back again due to it being such a good project
n/a	Respondent C	Able to drive by houses and know that WC did repairs on them Has seen own children learn to be servants from models set by adults at WC Working with partnership led to leader’s own son serving on summer staff
n/a	Respondent I	“Youth leaders enjoy the opportunities to participate in a prepackaged mission experience” Having work sites that are meaningful and challenging will lead to participants having a good experience (through visibility and neighborhood impact) Students are taught the “value and rewards from serving others in need” Volunteer leaders have the opportunity to serve a week on mission at little cost

**Faith in Action.** Data analysis resulted in references to putting faith into action in six articles from the Chattanooga Times Free Press and one from the SBGTV news story transcript from July 23, 2007. Respondent N and two survey responses also specified faith in action as a benefit of WC’s work in the Chattanooga area. Respondent N stated that WC aids in introducing people to Jesus by “witnessing to them in their space.” This individual also finds that the witnessing impact is strengthened due to WC showing up in the same place over multiple years. Finally, it was suggested that WC gives students a chance to learn the importance of spiritually serving as opposed to wanting accolades for what is done.

Respondent C noted that participating in the mission project is an opportunity for students to learn to be servants from the adult role models who work with WC. This respondent also sees WC as a way to plant seeds and “to impact the homeowner and neighborhoods with the message of Jesus Christ.” According to Respondent I, “students were taught the value and rewards from serving others in need.” Table 25 summarizes the data from document sources related to putting faith into action.

**Table 25**

*Benefits of Opportunities to Put Faith into Action Attributed to WC Staff and Leaders in Document Sources*

Date	Source	Summary of Benefits of Opportunities to Put Faith into Action
4/12/04	CTFP Article	Satisfies a need to provide ways to “empower students enough to serve their fellow man” Students can “learn the joy of serving”
7/17/04	CTFP Article	“Show people God’s love while repairing their homes”
7/23/07	SBGTV Transcript	“Practical way of showing God’s love to people”
7/23/16	CTFP Article	“Provide mission experiences designed to develop the hearts of students by serving others and sharing the Gospel”
7/7/17	CTFP Article	“Show their service to God by serving people”
7/16/17	CTFP Article	“Way to demonstrate that teens can get out of their comfort zone, work hard and help others”
7/18/22	CTFP Article	“Shows the homeowners and the community that the church is more than just a place that’s going to tell you what you’ve done wrong”

**Summary**

World Changers staff and leaders suggested there are many benefits to forming a long-term partnership to address community needs through mission service. The data showed that the logistical benefits come from working with other groups in the community to assist in obtaining funding and materials to complete the work while the mission organization provides the labor. WC leadership also noted the value of having

local businesses and churches involved through assisting with feeding and housing or offering supplies. The relationships built within the community were seen as important as well as being able to meet the needs of the people by repairing homes and through personal contact. Finally, the spiritual implications for those involved were seen as positive and beneficial. Those involved at the leadership level of WC saw benefits for youth leaders since the partnership provides ready-made mission experiences, benefits for the youth participants as they learn to put their faith into action and share God, and benefits for the community as it has the opportunity to see that the church has a greater purpose than pointing out what people have done wrong.

**Research Question 4: What, if any, potential areas exist that could improve or impede the success of long-term partnerships between the community and mission organizations that offer short-term student mission experiences?**

Research participants and document analysis demonstrated that there are some key areas to consider when developing a partnership between a community and a mission organization that offers short-term mission experiences. In order to begin such a partnership, there are relationships that need to be established at the onset. Another key focus is the importance of communication between the partner groups. Staff and leaders of WC referred to mediating expectations as an area to consider. The impacts of the organizational structure of the mission organization were also relevant to how the partnership develops and works over the years. Finally, there were pitfalls of the long-term presence and returning to the same area for multiple years.

***First Relationships to Develop***

According to the only mention of relationships to develop first by a community member, Respondent A suggested that there could be individuals in the community who might offer

resources and help for this type of project. Ministry leaders offered two examples of where to reach out first. Respondent E mentioned establishing solid relationships with community leaders in government offices, area churches, or other community organizations. In Respondent J's responses, the ministry leader offered it would be useful to find sources who would be the best points of contact and funding such as local ministry groups, social services organizations, and government officials. However, this individual also noted that it is important to keep up with leadership changes in these same entities to maintain contact as the partnership continues.

WC staff and leaders found the first relationships to develop were focused on local church groups and area government bodies. During the ride-along with Respondent M, the local Baptist association was discussed as a valuable partner organization. They have been helpful in arranging some of the logistical details such as bathroom and shower trailers. The association has also helped apply for grants that were used to fund WC and the work being done which helps offset the county's budget limitations. Respondent L also named the local Baptist association as a first point of contact along with forming relationships with local churches. It was noted that being associated with a denomination or nationally recognized organization makes building early relationships with churches and government agencies easier. The association was referenced by Respondent O as a partner to assist with finding housing for participants and to reach out into the community. It was stated that it is important to get them to really support the project.

Respondent N mentioned starting with local churches as well. Those that are older and maybe struggling were given as potential relationships since they would most likely have stronger ties in their communities. The benefits could work in the other direction as well, since the mission organization can give to them and "pour into them," offering encouragement during the time WC is present.

Respondent C mentioned working with the Chattanooga Department of Neighborhood Services to determine which communities would be most benefitted by the work being done. According to Respondent L, it is important to find the government agencies with the money and the ones who are willing to enter the partnership. Specifically, this individual mentioned agencies such as Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Community Redevelopment Agencies (CRA). The potential of social services professionals in locating funding options was also expressed. The importance of relationships with local government and other agencies was repeated by Respondent O. Those with “deep pockets” such as city officials like the mayor were mentioned. The interviewee specifically noted that the Chattanooga Neighborhood Services organization was an important connection for this WC partnership.

### ***Communication***

According to the community member represented as Respondent A, the “most important thing for starting this type of partnership is communication” and then continuing to maintain it with those assisting in the work. However, it was also noted that a potential pitfall could be a lack of consistency in the communication between involved partner organizations.

Ministry leaders also saw communication as a factor in the success of WC. Respondent E stated that WC “does a terrific job communicating to all areas of those involved.” According to Respondent J, the attitude that “someone else will cover it” can be prevented if proper communication exists from the start.

Communication was mentioned in all three interviews with WC staff. An important consideration according to Respondent L, is providing paperwork such as “contracts” to help ensure that everyone involved knows what they are committing to do. Respondent N suggested that good communication with youth leaders can assist them as they prepare to bring students.

Expectations can be set forth, and the long-term presence of WC offers the additional benefit of having people who have been involved previously to help them prepare and to answer questions they may have. Respondent O discussed how not having adequate communication can cause difficulties. The interviewee talked about how the process of working with government agencies sometimes meant that supplies were difficult to obtain when they were needed. Regulations and rules may require specific procedures for procuring materials. This can cause delays that prevent the work crews from receiving what they need immediately. Communication between the partner organizations is necessary to keep these delays to a minimum.

### ***Mediating Expectations***

Although there were no references to mediating expectations provided by community members or ministry leaders, WC staff and leaders commented about this topic six times. According to Respondent J, it is necessary to develop a plan for choosing projects, guidelines for completing them, and how to finish the work if it can't be completed during the week. The partners must determine "what is doable in the time frame" they have to accomplish their tasks. Respondent C also recognized that preparation and knowing what is expected will be important. Those involved should "make sure the mission organization is well prepared and able to complete their jobs, that they are done well, and meet or exceed the city's expectations."

Respondent L discussed the challenge of getting the city "to give us a chance, because we say we're going to bring in teenagers to do all this work." The mission organization will need to detail the process and what is to be expected from the work being done. Dealing with others if their expectations aren't realized was mentioned by Respondent N as well. Youth leaders often have their own perceptions of what will be provided, so it can be difficult when "expectations of

what people thought would be provided by worship and what was provided was a little bit different.”

It is also beneficial to provide youth leaders with possible disruptions that could arise according to Respondent N. Participants “have to be okay with being uncomfortable” since there may be situations that require them to adapt. An example was provided of going to a work site that was outside of the immediate city where cell phone and GPS signals might be hard to receive. The interviewee also offered that having everyone aware of what is expected by “surrendering your time to what an expectation is and functioning as a group as a whole will often help those plans not fall through.”

### ***Organizational Structure Impacts***

Ministry leaders and community members did not have any references to the impacts of organizational structure changes over the years that WC has partnered with the Chattanooga community. However, this was a topic mentioned by all three interviewees as well as during the ride-along with the local coordinator. Table 26 reflects the information provided.

**Table 26***Organizational Structure Impacts According to WC Staff and Leaders in Interviews*

Source	Summary of Organizational Structure Impacts
Respondent L	<p>When under a large national organization, there was a benefit of greater publicity and outreach, but decisions were perhaps made more for the larger organization and not specifically WC projects</p> <p>Now that it's a private non-profit, "make decisions based on what's best for World Changers"</p> <p>Liability considerations: under larger organization, more to lose if a lawsuit was filed. As independent group, not as much to gain by doing that</p> <p>When starting such a partnership, the first year in an area will focus on small projects. The mission organization will need a minimum number of participants to break even since they aren't under the umbrella of a larger organization that can underwrite or make up for deficits</p>
Respondent M	<p>Changes in leadership/structure meant less patience and confidence in project success or funding</p> <p>Created a dissonance that could have threatened/disrupted the partnership (local churches stepped in to help cover financial requirements)</p>
Respondent N	<p>Budget issues can become conflict when larger organization's priorities don't agree with those of the mission group</p> <p>Can be impacted when issues or controversies arise that affect the larger organization</p> <p>Big organizations often more focused on budgets but this is not always consistent with ministry benefits or goals</p> <p>As a separate organization, there may be limited resources which can impact the number of staff and keeping up with all the responsibilities and expectations</p> <p>A positive to being a separate organization is being able to focus on why they are in the city, the mission priority</p>
Respondent O	<p>Being part of a larger organization, one may take for granted the things provided such as supplies like copy machines, staff, etc.</p> <p>The larger organizations can help cover when the mission group does not quite meet their budget requirements</p>

***Cultural Considerations***

According to the data, some participants felt that it is important to keep cultural considerations and possible differences in mind when developing a mission partnership. Respondent O noted that youth leaders need to get participants prepared for what they might see in the community where work is done. Respondent J agreed with this and suggested that leaders need to research and reach out to local coordinators and ministry contacts to prepare for what

may be seen or encountered. This respondent suggested that preparing students with cultural awareness would be beneficial.

Respondent N also agreed that this is an important area of consideration, relating that most of the WC participation comes from Caucasian Baptist churches. There is the potential for misunderstanding the culture of the communities where students work. This interviewee offered that it is important to realize “when you’re going on a mission, you’re going into a different culture,” but to be aware that the purpose of the ministry is not to change their culture to that of the participants. Instead, it is to minister to the needs of that community while being self-aware of how to fit into that community as the work is accomplished. It was also suggested that a partnership like the one WC has with Chattanooga offers opportunities for the community to maintain dignity by contributing to the work being done.

### ***Pitfalls of Returning to the Same Place Over a Long Period***

While the data analysis did not reveal any pitfalls perceived by community members, Respondent J, a ministry leader, did offer two potential issues. The first is the possibility that local businesses may be offended or feel left out if they are not approached about participating in the project or supplying resources. It was also suggested that the partnership requires trust and an ongoing evaluation process “to determine what has worked/is still working and what needs to be addressed for future projects.”

The staff and leaders of WC also referred to possible pitfalls or issues that could impact the partnership and its success over time. Respondent O mentioned three potential conflicts that could arise. First, there is the problem of houses not getting finished or having issues with the repairs later; this would require people able and willing to fix this year after year. Second, it is possible that the city could become too comfortable and want to control everything as they treat

WC “like a company that they had hired” rather than a volunteer presence which might also impact trust. Finally, at times, the respondent related that there had been trouble keeping construction coordinators due to the relationship with the city and the sometimes complicated process of obtaining supplies.

According to Respondent N, some of the pitfalls of returning are related to youth groups that participate in the same location for multiple years. This individual suggested that it may be useful to go somewhere new because they won’t have expectations from a previous experience in the city. There is the risk of making comparisons from year to year if they keep returning to the same place. Other possible pitfalls include having their own expectations such as wanting to go to the same restaurants or do the same activities, their expectations or wants may interfere with the overall schedule because they feel too comfortable, or this sense of being too comfortable may lead to “taking advantage without even meaning to.” Respondent I agreed with the benefit of going to other locations rather than always returning to the same one, “the scope of the experience may be reduced by not going to different locations.”

Another pitfall may arise due to the general location of Chattanooga and other places WC operates. According to Respondent F, many of the work areas are in the Bible Belt which can lessen the potential for spiritual impact. It is also more likely that students are from similar areas, and the work is the same as what they could do back home. Finally, Respondent F also referenced the pitfall of remaining in a particular community. It is possible that the community may become reliant “on WC to provide free labor.” There could also be budget cuts from the local government agencies since they know WC will do the work for free.

## *Summary*

The data analysis from survey responses, interviews, and document sources revealed there were areas of concern that could aid or impede the success of a partnership formed between a mission organization and a community. One of these is determining the most important relationships to develop first as planning begins. Local government, community organizations, and churches were mentioned as potential starting points.

Another topic that was addressed in the data was the importance of communication. It was suggested that it is necessary not just as the partnership is forming, but it also needs to be continued as time elapses. This can prevent misunderstandings about how things will be done or who will accomplish which tasks. Good communication can establish mutual understanding to better enable success.

Mediating expectations was another area of concern, both for the management of the mission project as well as for those who will be participating. It is useful to develop procedures to determine what work is possible to complete in the project time frame. Providing group leaders with detailed information about what to expect and what might be disruptive can also lead to a more pleasant experience.

World Changers has changed organizational status through the years of the Chattanooga partnership. These structural considerations can impact how the project is organized, who is in charge and makes key decisions, and finances. Before beginning a similar type of partnership, it would be useful to investigate how this might impact control of the mission organization and its work.

Finally, there were references to the pitfalls of returning to the same location over time. Data reflected impacts related to the community as well as for youth leaders who choose to bring

their group to the same place year after year. Respondents provided examples of how negative situations might arise if these concerns are not addressed adequately.

## **Conclusion**

Through data analysis of survey responses, interviews, and other documents, the researcher determined there were three broad categories of benefits to a long-term partnership between a mission organization and a local community. These were logistical considerations and impacts, community considerations and impacts, and spiritual considerations and impacts. The data also reflected key themes relevant to RQ4 about how to improve or minimize potential impediments to the success of the partnership. Determining the first relationships to develop as well as maintaining communication were stressed as important for the partnership to continue in the community. Other areas of consideration were mediating expectations, both for the partner organizations and those coming to minister at the project, the impact of organizational structure changes, and the possible pitfalls of returning to a location over time. To develop and maintain a partnership such as the one that WC and the Chattanooga area have had since 2004, it has been demonstrated by the data that it takes time and willingness by all those involved. Respondent L stated that “it’s not something that you can say, ‘Hey, I want this, I want it next summer...’ I would say typically, it’s a minimum of a two-year process and even more like sometimes three or four.” In the following chapter, the results of the data will be discussed as they relate to the literature presented in Chapter Two.

## **Evaluation of the Research Design**

Using a case study for this research was an appropriate choice. Since the focus was on a single location, the case study allowed the researcher to focus on the actions, perceptions, and impact of the specific partnership built over the years between World Changers and the city of

Chattanooga. The researcher was also given opportunity to visit the location during a project week which provided first-hand experience among the people involved. The research design offered participants the chance to help with recruiting other participants as well, expanding the potential participant pool. In further studies, longer visits to the project as well as more individual interviews would be useful to further develop the first-person viewpoint.

One area that proved more difficult than expected was gathering data about the perceptions of community members. Even with repeated attempts to contact local officials, the data collection process reflected less success in receiving completed surveys from them. However, the local newspaper archives were a valuable asset as they provided many articles from throughout the history of the partnership. These offered reflections and direct quotations from community members which added to the data. Reaching out to other media outlets such as television stations gave mixed results. While a few were willing to assist with the research, others indicated they did not have the time to provide transcripts or video links. If the study were repeated, it would be beneficial to consider alternate methods to encourage community members' responses.

The research design provided enough data to not only evaluate perceptions of the partnership and work that has been done but also allowed the researcher to develop suggestions for those wanting to begin a similar partnership. The data offered both positive and negative viewpoints which helped the researcher consider ways to encourage success and prevent situations that might impede it. This was a key goal of the study, so the case study design and the elements included in data collection and analysis proved sufficient for the task.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS**

### **Overview**

The purpose of this case study was to examine the partnership between the World Changers mission organization and the community of Chattanooga. WC coordinates mission trips for students that involve going into a community and completing repairs on houses and other facilities. The researcher was interested in determining what benefits and concerns the stakeholders observed as well as using the data to develop suggestions for other organizations interested in starting similar work and building partnerships in different communities.

This chapter discusses the conclusions drawn from the data collection and analysis process. It begins by reviewing the research purpose and questions that guided the study. The next section describes the conclusions, implications, and applications determined from the analysis of the data. The chapter concludes with suggestions for other organizations wanting to start the process of forming a mission partnership relationship within a community. Research limitations and suggestions for further research are also noted at the close of the chapter.

### **Research Purpose**

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore the long-term partnership of World Changers with the community of Chattanooga, Tennessee to understand best practices for creating similar cross-sector partnerships involving short-term mission work. Within this research, long-term partnership is defined as an arrangement existing for at least ten years. There are three theories guiding this study. The first is covenant community as described by Lingenfelter (2008). According to Lingenfelter's description, covenant communities bind together with Christ as the center. The second is legitimate peripheral participation as described by Lave and Wenger (1991). This concept allows individuals to work towards full participation

through a process of observation and gradual added responsibility. For this study, it is related to students putting faith into action through mission service. The last is cross-sector social-oriented partnerships as described by Selsky and Parker (2005). These partnerships exist between organizations from different social sectors. The research for this study is related to long-term partnerships established between a community and a mission organization that offers these experiences for students.

### **Research Questions**

**RQ1.** What, if any, benefits do members of the community perceive from long-term partnerships between the community and mission organizations that offer short-term student mission experiences?

**RQ2.** What, if any, benefits do ministry leaders, both local to the community and those who have worked as participants, perceive from long-term partnerships between the community and mission organizations that offer short-term student mission experiences?

**RQ3.** What, if any, benefits do leaders and staff of mission organizations that offer short-term student mission experiences perceive from long-term partnerships with communities?

**RQ4.** What, if any, potential areas exist that could improve or impede the success of long-term partnerships between the community and mission organizations that offer short-term student mission experiences?

### **Research Conclusions, Implications, and Applications**

This study resulted in data that was analyzed to determine if the research participants perceived any benefits from the long-term partnership that WC has built with the city of Chattanooga. All three participant groups recognized benefits but also provided insight into areas that could create concern or conflict. This section discusses the theoretical, empirical, and practical conclusions, implications, and applications based on the analysis of the data that was collected. A summary of the benefits to the partnership as described by community members, ministry leaders, and WC leadership is found in Table 27 while Table 28 summarizes other factors that could impact the partnership determined from the data analysis.

**Table 27***Summary of Benefits Described by Research Study Participants*

Area of Consideration	Community Members	Ministry Leaders	WC Leaders/Staff
Logistical	Additional funding sources	Local budgets stretched due to free labor	Stretching local resources due to free labor
	Local opportunities to be involved	Churches have opportunity to minister to participants (housing/food).  Business participation through donations helps to keep participant costs down.	Local involvement is essential.  Returning year after year offers benefit of local knowledge. Useful for problem solving and reaching neighborhoods
Community	Shared mission to help community	Shared mission to help—need all partners working together	Recognize that communities are different but can find common goals to meet specific needs.
	Building and improving community relations	Consistency and reputation  Relationships with community organizations helps to meet more needs.	Continued connections with local groups who have previously helped  Easier to coordinate housing and food for participants
		Opportunity for local groups to participate (such as Meals on Wheels)	Consistency/continued presence in area; Positive reputation useful if things don't go as planned  Offers local churches ministry and outreach opportunities.
Spiritual	Did not address faith in action or impact on participants directly but did suggest students were seen giving of themselves	Ready-made experiences for students that they may not be able to do at home	Students learn about God and relying on Him; Gets participants out of their comfort zone.
		Benefits such as meeting new people, a sense of accomplishment, getting to spread the Gospel, learning new skills	Youth leaders get “prepackaged mission experience.”  Adult volunteers have opportunity to serve with less out of pocket costs.  Students learn how to put faith into action by watching adult leaders.  Participants experience the joy of serving and learning to interact with others.

**Table 28***Factors to Consider that Could Impact the Partnership and Its Success*

Area of Consideration	Factor(s)
Logistical	<p>Determine who to contact initially to begin working toward a partnership.</p> <p>Set clear expectations that are known and understood by all involved parties.</p> <p>Strong and ongoing communication both among partnership members and with youth leaders bringing students to the project is essential.</p> <p>Set realistic expectations. Be aware of what can be accomplished in the allotted time frame.</p> <p>Prepare youth leaders and mitigate their expectations, especially those who may have attended projects previously.</p> <p>Consider the pros and cons of working under the umbrella of a larger organization rather than as a separate entity.</p>
Community	<p>Keep in mind cultural differences that may be present in the locality being served.</p> <p>Keep in mind that local businesses/organizations may feel left out if not invited to contribute.</p> <p>Involve community members in developing a plan to complete any work that may not be completed during the project.</p>
Spiritual	<p>Help participants understand they are there to minister to needs and not change the culture of the community.</p>

**Theoretical Conclusions**

Data collection and analysis revealed that community members (RQ1), ministry leaders (RQ2), and mission organization staff and leaders (RQ3) found benefits to the partnership in areas of logistical considerations and impacts, community considerations and impacts, and spiritual considerations and impacts. These themes relate to the literature studied and presented in chapter two. This section will describe the conclusions gathered from the results of the data.

### *Logistical Considerations and Impacts*

The partnership between WC and the city of Chattanooga involves many local organizations. As a result, there is a greater pool from which to draw various resources, including financial support, physical supplies, and manpower. This idea reflects the ideas presented in the literature related to CSSPs (Selsky & Parker, 2005). The literature reviewed demonstrated that sharing resources is a way to address larger issues, especially those that would be difficult for one group to take on alone. In a 2016 article, van der Water noted that partnerships allow the involved parties to share resources and skills which in turn allows these groups to accomplish more than they could individually. Joniškienė et al (2020) agreed that combining resources allows issues to be addressed that could not be solved alone. The results of the data analysis confirmed this is true. The data evidence of the long-term partnership developed by WC with the city of Chattanooga demonstrated that Arena 3 partnerships are possible when an organization is willing. These partnerships are often formed to address social issues and having both government and non-profit members allows access to additional funding which was supported by the data.

Participants coming to Chattanooga need housing and food while they are doing the work for the project. The partnership with WC has reached out to local churches and businesses to assist with this necessity. Local construction materials suppliers also assist by providing things such as paint, windows, and lumber, sometimes at a discounted price. Adding businesses to the partnership falls into Arena 4. All three research participant groups mentioned the importance of having local support. Respondent J offered that “local businesses may benefit financially...and may also get positive publicity.” The same respondent (J) also stated that the logistics of planning a project of the size of WC are immense and having community relations will make things less difficult. Respondent A discussed using a local market for watermelons which

“helped both groups of people and ultimately strengthened the community.”

The mutual goal of improving the conditions for the residents of the city agrees with the research presented by Brinkerhoff and Brinkerhoff (2011) who noted that the relationships built through CSSPs result in dedication to reaching a mutual end goal. The city of Chattanooga was noted in the data as wanting to help its less fortunate citizens. The research in this study demonstrated that it is possible for a Christian NGO to share goals with communities to form long-term partnerships to address said goals. Although it takes time to build such a relationship, when mutual goals are at the center of the partnership, it allows the NGO an opportunity to advance the Gospel by meeting recognized needs of the community. It is not necessary for the community and its leaders to embrace the fullness of the Gospel in order for the partnership to be successful.

**Perceptions of Community Members.** Community members noted that by including other organizations within the community that are involved in improving the lives of the residents, more money was attained through grants and government funding. This enables the efficiency and effectiveness of the work to increase as the partnership members use one another’s resources. In the case of the WC partnership with Chattanooga, two of the key pieces are funding for the supplies needed to complete the home repairs as well as supporting the participants through food and housing. Specific agencies such as East Ridge Revitalization, the Department of Neighborhood Services and Community Development, the Front Porch Alliance, Chattanooga Neighborhood Services, and the Department of Economic and Community Development were named in document sources as assisting with funding and other necessities.

Community members also appreciated that local churches and businesses could be involved in the project. Specific areas of benefit were for housing and feeding those who come to

Chattanooga to participate. It was also noted by Respondent A that due to their involvement, churches could broaden their own mission service in the neighborhoods where they are located. Brainerd Baptist Church was mentioned by Respondent A for its many years of housing participants and providing breakfast and dinner for them each day. Document sources showed many examples of local businesses that provided meals and water for the volunteers. This results in positive publicity for those businesses which improves their community relations.

**Perceptions of Ministry Leaders.** Respondent J stated that having the partnership helps budgets for local agencies impact more people since WC provides labor at no cost. This frees up more money for supplies. The many opportunities for local churches and businesses to participate were also seen as a benefit by ministry leaders. It was noted that forming relationships with businesses and local churches is a positive step to take. Churches can act as ministers and provide necessary resources to the project participants. According to one local minister, during the 2006 project, there were 21 churches helping to feed the WC volunteers each day (Chattanooga Times Free Press; July 15, 2006). Having local businesses assist with food helps keep the cost manageable for leaders bringing their youth groups to the project. Ministry leaders in 2022 rated the food an average of 4.2/5 and the timeliness of the food 5/5. They also averaged a score of 4.83/5 when asked about using the same sources in the future.

**Perceptions of World Changers Leadership.** Respondent C noted that WC has provided over 300,000 hours of volunteer work since 2004, the equivalent of 5.97 million dollars. This has allowed the financial resources of the community groups to impact many more people than they could have alone. Many of the documents named different agencies that have worked with WC through the years, both in providing funding as well as building supplies. WC staff did note, however, that it is necessary to have backup plans in case work cannot be

completed during the week of the project. Locating local volunteers who remain in the community and can address incomplete work or unexpected repairs will help maintain good relations and publicity.

It was noted by WC leadership that reaching out to local businesses, churches, and community organizations is necessary. These groups can assist in locating additional funds, supplying materials (often at a discount), and helping meet the needs of the project participants. There are times that these groups can help open doors for WC to work within a certain neighborhood. Sharing the burden of finances and supplies allows more work to be completed which is a benefit to the stakeholders in the partnership. Of particular note was that after the COVID-19 pandemic interrupted WC projects, local churches stepped in to sponsor houses when work was able to resume. Due to the interruption, the county had not budgeted for the supplies and other needs associated with WC, but the relationships built in the past enabled the project to continue until the city was able to add funding.

WC leadership recognized the importance of local opportunities to assist with housing and food. Respondent O also stressed that as the project has grown through the years, it has been essential to engage more local businesses and churches to assist with this task. Another theme that WC leadership noted was the benefit of returning to the same area due to having local knowledge and local people to assist. Respondent N offered that locals can assist in getting the right resources to solve problems when they arise unexpectedly. Respondent O also stated that sometimes having local contacts, such as a church near a certain neighborhood, can help bridge gaps and open up opportunities. Respondent C added that this local knowledge and the relationships in the community often influence youth groups to return to Chattanooga year after year.

### ***Community Considerations and Impacts***

In the theological section of the literature review, Paul's work with the early Christian churches was discussed. These congregations relied upon support from one another to meet the needs of their respective groups of believers. The data analysis in this study supported the idea that developing a mission partnership entails determining and meeting the needs of the community being served. By forming a partnership, WC has been able to work with the city of Chattanooga to improve the housing situation. As reflected in Sweeney (2019), the individual groups involved in the partnership have specific responsibilities based on their resources and strengths. However, the result, as indicated by the responses from community members, ministry leaders, and WC staff, is that the identified needs in the community can be addressed. None of the partner groups would have the same success alone. However, as noted in the earlier discussion of *koinonia*, they complement one another and make up for what is lacking to build a strong ministry to the citizens of Chattanooga.

**Perceptions of Community Members.** Community members specifically referenced the benefit of a shared mission nine times. The city was described as wanting to help less fortunate community members. The partnership not only accomplishes this task, but it also brings people together from around the city to assist with ensuring the work is accomplished. One individual stated in an article from the CTFP dated July 18, 2004, "Improving neighborhoods is our job. They share our mission." The mayor also echoed this concept in a CTFP article from July 17, 2017, and credits this mutual concern with helping many families stay in their homes.

One of the greatest areas of benefit demonstrated in the data from community members is the area of community relations. This included benefits to the homeowners, communities as a whole, and local businesses as well as meeting the needs of the community. In an article from the

CTFP dated July 26, 2007, a homeowner tells how it makes her feel good to have the work done because she could not have done it herself. Another article from July 17, 2014 quotes a neighbor of one of the homeowners, “Y’all are making my hood look good!” Respondent H mentioned the partnership with the local Meals on Wheels organization. WC participants helped deliver food to elderly homebound residents, and Respondent H noted “delivering meals was only a small part of the service provided.”

**Perceptions of Ministry Leaders.** Two ministry leaders agreed that it is necessary to share a mission so that everyone will be on the same page and work is done that respects everyone’s concerns. To assist with this, it was noted that those in charge of the respective partnership member organizations need to work together toward these same goals. Another theme that appeared was the benefit of a continuing presence in the community. Respondent E suggested that this helps to establish solid reputations that can grow and mature as the partnership continues. Respondent J noted that it also provides consistency and allows all the involved partners “to learn and plan together.”

Community relations were seen by ministry leaders as another benefit. Respondent J saw the benefit to local organizations as they are able to make a larger impact with the resources they have. Respondents G and J both mentioned the importance of meeting community needs and the benefit it gives to the residents and the neighborhoods. Repairs are provided that might not otherwise be within the means of the residents being helped.

Ministry leaders also recognized the benefit of having opportunities for local groups to be involved. Respondent E mentioned the partnership with Meals on Wheels. Respondent J saw a benefit in planning for the needs of the volunteers and how this can be made easier when local groups have resources ready and available.

**Perceptions of WC Leadership.** In the case of the WC partnership with Chattanooga, one WC leader recognized that every community is different, so determining the mutual goals is necessary. However, as Respondent O stated, the “selling point was always where everybody wins.” Through a long-term presence, it allows the partnering organizations time to determine each other’s needs as well as learn one another’s procedures so that the work will be more successful and run more smoothly. Respondent C suggested that developing a long-term relationship built on mutual goals will also allow the work to continue even when there are snags from time to time: “there have been a few bumps along the way, but we have stayed together side by side to help those in need in Chattanooga.”

The ability to connect with local groups who have assisted in past years makes arranging for the next year easier according to Respondent M. Respondent O also stated that having a few churches involved can lead to the ability to draw more to participate as the project continues year after year. Coordination is benefitted since leaders are not starting from scratch every time. According to Respondent N, building relationships in the community allows consistency and continued support even if things may go wrong from time to time. There are benefits for youth leaders as well since the knowledge gained about the community can be passed along to them and provide for smoother logistical operations.

WC leadership found that local churches benefit from being partners in the project since it gives them an opportunity to get into the community in a different way. Respondent N agreed that building rapport and relationships in the community is a positive attribute. This respondent shared a story about using a local donut shop instead of a national chain which gave the shop publicity as well as income. However, there is also the potential for government leadership changes to impact the partnership as discussed by Respondent M. It is also necessary to ensure

that WC's work is seen as a way to reflect Christ and not to gain accolades for those involved in the work.

Homeowners benefitted not just from having their home repaired but also from the attention they receive from the youth on the work crews according to a CTFP article from April 12, 2004. Meeting the needs of the community is a benefit since it can possibly double the value of funding from local sources. According to Respondent I, when local groups become involved, it expands the mission of WC to include more people in meeting the community needs. Local churches may determine other ministry opportunities and boost their reputations.

### ***Spiritual Considerations and Impacts***

In Philippians 2, Paul focuses on the idea of putting others before self. The data analyzed for this study agrees that this is a key area of benefit for participants. All three participant groups (community members, ministry leaders, and WC staff/leadership) mentioned this as an area that impacts the students who come to the project. As previously noted, there were multiple references to students making the needs of the homeowners and community a priority. Participating in WC provides opportunity to demonstrate the Fruit of the Spirit by showing Christ's love to others, while giving of one's time and energy to improve others' situations. The results of the study also suggest that witnessing opportunities are improved since the partnership continues and is recognized. This gives students the potential for more positive interactions as they minister and witness to community members where they are.

Putting faith into action through ministry experiences ties to LPP and transformational learning. The literature review provided evidence that using a service-learning or hands-on experience can be an effective way to offer ways to put faith into action. As the Fruit of the Spirit is demonstrated, students are learning to give of themselves just as Christ did. Students are

sometimes able to see the impact they are having as homeowners express their appreciation. Document sources agreed with this concept offering that students not only learn about helping others but also get a better understanding of working as a team. The experience of showing God's love and giving back to others is an area that was recognized by the data as a key component of the spiritual benefits to participation in WC.

As students experience putting faith in action, they may be moved to become more involved and take on roles of leadership. This is the description of LPP, modeled by Jesus and His disciples. After analyzing the data, the potential for WC to lead to this kind of experience was evidenced. Respondent C related how "to see my own children learn to be servants by helping me with World Changers is a great thing. And when my son was selected to be on a summer staff team a few years back, I was a proud and grateful father."

**Perceptions of Community Members.** Although this area of benefit was the least addressed by community members, there were examples of how students giving of themselves and putting faith into action was perceived. Community members stated that the experience was a blessing for the students (Chattanooga Times Free Press; July 16, 2004). Seeing the emotions of the homeowners as they watch the repairs being done by volunteer youth can be an emotional experience according to a community member in a CTFP article from July 18, 2017.

Putting their faith into action was discussed by a local reporter in an SBGTV news story on July 23, 2007. Respondent H agreed, saying that the "youth need more opportunities like this so they learn to give back. One community member also mentioned that they youth "don't preach or proselytize. They "show their faith with good works" in an article from the CTFP dated July 26, 2005.

**Perceptions of Ministry Leaders.** Ministry leaders appreciated having WC as a ready-

made mission experience for their students. Respondent K stated that not having to worry about most of the details allows leaders more time to bond with the students. Respondent J also noted that this provides an opportunity for groups to participate in experiences that they would be unable to do on their own. Respondent E noted that everyone involved receives a blessing. Many of the document sources echoed the benefits of the project including themes such as making new friends who share their beliefs, changing lives (and the sense of joy and accomplishment this brings), getting to spread the Gospel, and learning skills such as patience.

Putting faith into action was another benefit that ministry leaders acknowledged. Many of the document sources included quotes from leaders related to how the youth were being given a chance to show their faith through their actions as well as to offer an example of Christ. In an article from the CTFP dated June 18, 2019, one leader noted that students also see “how God can work in their lives” to help them be more capable than they thought they could be.

**Perceptions of World Changers Leadership.** WC was founded to offer youth mission service opportunities, so it would be assumed that leaders would note positive impacts on participants. The data analyzed from WC leadership confirmed this. Respondent L remarked that when serving as a youth leader who brought students to a project, students had more life changing moments than with any other event. According to Respondent N, students have the opportunity to learn about God and how to rely more on Him since they may be uncomfortable. The benefit to youth ministers to participate in a “prepackaged mission experience” was noted by Respondent C. WC leaders also recognized that the project allows adult volunteers to serve at little cost.

Putting faith into action was also perceived as a benefit to the WC partnership in Chattanooga. Respondent C mentioned that students learn how to serve by watching the adult

role models who assist with the project. Respondent I noted the benefit of interaction with homeowners and experiencing the value and rewards that serving others brings. Many of the document sources reported references to students learning there is joy in serving and how it is possible to show God's love and share the Gospel in many ways, including by repairing homes.

#### ***Research Question 4***

When beginning or continuing a partnership like WC has, one of the greatest selling points to leaders is that it creates a situation where everyone wins. The community residents receive help, community leaders save money since the labor is provided for free (thus allowing more residents to be impacted), and the mission organization can provide a ministry opportunity within the community. The following section will provide areas that could improve or impede the formation and long-term success of a partnership.

**Issues that Can Encourage Long-term Partnership Success.** The following themes offer elements that are important in beginning to form a partnership as well as maintaining it for the long-term. Areas such as which relationships should be developed first, communication, and mediating expectations can provide a strong basis as the partnership begins and its members build trust with each other. Knowing who to contact first as well as maintaining adequate communication among all those involved can help gather support and prevent power struggles and misunderstandings. It is also important to ensure that everyone grasps what the expectations are to keep everyone focused on the same goals that are achievable with the time and resources available.

Other areas of the research that can impact a partnership are organizational structures, cultural considerations, and potential pitfalls of returning to the same location for mission service over a long period of time. Organizational structures of the partner members can influence how

money is spent, what supplies are available, and publicity (both good and bad). Since the mission organization brings in people to serve from other locations, it is also important for everyone involved to realize that local cultures may be different from their own. The mission group is a Christian organization, so there is the need to realize they may be working with or serving non-Christians. As the partnership continues, there may also be issues that arise from remaining in the same place. These could come from within the community itself or from church groups that come back to participate year after year.

*First Relationships to Develop.* Participants of this study suggested that the benefits to the community were felt in the relations built. This included general relations like involving multiple common interest groups such as neighborhood development organizations as well as being able to meet the needs of more residents. Forming a partnership that stays in the area and commits to being there year after year gives a sense of continuing presence. The reputation that is established can continue to impact the availability of work to do and the willingness of the community welcoming the assistance that is provided. Using the local knowledge of those who live in the area, especially local churches, benefits everyone involved. The churches already have a presence in the neighborhood communities, so they can help open doors to residents that the mission group may not be able to accomplish alone. Neighborhood groups may have access to funding such as grants that can increase the potential for work to be done.

The data indicated there are certain relationships that are important to develop first when attempting to start a mission service partnership. Some of these were government leaders, local churches, and local ministry groups. Since WC is associated with Southern Baptists, connecting with the local Baptist association was seen as valuable by Respondents L and M. Respondent C mentioned local neighborhood agencies and service organizations as beneficial partners.

Connections with other groups can impact the amount of money available and help the mission organization gain entry to neighborhoods.

**Communication.** Respondent A noted that “the most important thing for starting this type of partnership is communication” which was echoed by other respondents. According to the responses, strong communication needs to exist between the various groups involved in planning and executing the project. However, it is also beneficial to maintain good communication with the youth leaders who are bringing students to the project according to Respondent N. Respondent O detailed how inadequate communication may result in delays in supplies or misunderstandings about policies or regulations.

**Mediating Expectations.** This area was only addressed by WC leadership. It was noted that having procedures and guidelines in place for choosing projects and how to complete them will aid in a smooth experience. The available time frame of one week needs to be considered when work sites are chosen to improve the chances of successful completion of the repairs. It is also necessary to provide youth leaders with details about what to expect so they are prepared. Respondent N noted that these individuals often have preconceived ideas about how things will or should be based on previous experiences. Reminding them of potential areas of disruption can also enable the week to run more smoothly since everyone is prepared ahead of time.

**Organizational Structure Impacts.** There are considerations that can arise depending on if the mission organization is based under the umbrella of a larger group or acts as an independent non-profit. World Changers leadership noted areas such as liability, financial support, publicity, and controversial issues within the parent organization as areas that could impact the success of a partnership. This is an area to consider when deciding to develop a partnership like the one in this study. Respondent O stated that when under a larger group, it is

easy to take simple things like office supplies or additional administrative staff for granted. However, Respondent L offered that the risks of liability suits may be less if acting independently since there is not as much potential for financial gain. Respondents M and N noted that changes in leadership and controversies can impact budgets, public perception, and the requirements for number of participants. If a group is wanting to begin a partnership to offer mission services, these are considerations that could influence many of the decisions to be made.

***Cultural Considerations.*** A partnership between a mission organization and a local community needs to keep in mind the cultural differences that may be experienced. These may come from Christian leaders working with non-Christian leaders in the community. They could also arise as participants travel from their home areas to a new place to serve. Respondents J and O agreed that it is important for youth leaders to prepare their students for what they may encounter when they attend the WC project. Communities within a city may have their own cultural identities as well, as pointed out by Respondent N. As a result, there should be a focus on the mission of serving the needs of the community rather than trying to change their culture.

***Pitfalls of Returning to the Same Place.*** While the research demonstrated many benefits to establishing a long-term partnership and working in the same location over time, there were also potential pitfalls noted. Respondent J mentioned that some local businesses may feel left out if they are not directly asked to participate. Respondent O offered three areas of potential conflict: projects being left uncompleted and needing volunteers to finish the task, the city becoming comfortable and treating the mission group as a hired contractor, and retaining coordinators if conflict arises with the city.

It is also possible that youth groups who continue to return to the same locality become too comfortable and begin to have expectations based on previous trips. This was noted by

Respondent N who stated that these expectations can become an interference whether it is meant to be or not. Respondent I also offered that while it is a positive that groups want to return to the project, it may be more beneficial for students to experience the variety of going to many places. It is possible, according to Respondent F, that Chattanooga's location in the Bible Belt may not offer as much opportunity for spiritual impact since many of the churches who participate come from the same area.

### **Empirical Conclusions**

The data indicated that the partnership between WC and the city of Chattanooga has provided measurable benefits to the community. According to the calculations by those involved, during the years WC has been working in Chattanooga, volunteers have contributed over 300,000 hours of service. Using the national numbers for monetary value of volunteer hours, this amounts to almost six million dollars of labor cost that the city has not had to include in their budget. The One Chattanooga document from 2022 notes that this work has impacted approximately 700 homes and the families that live in them from 2004 until that year.

Since the partnership between WC and Chattanooga has been ongoing since 2004, it has allowed numerous local agencies to contribute to the work of improving housing conditions. Specific groups mentioned in the data were East Ridge Revitalization, Department of Neighborhood Services and Community Development, Front Porch Alliance, Chattanooga Neighborhood Services, Department of Economic and Community Development, and Meals on Wheels. Many of these organizations assisted in raising funds or applying for grants to purchase supplies for the worksites.

At the same time, local churches were involved in numerous ways. One of the key services offered by churches is feeding participants lunch each day while they are working on

houses. At certain points in the history of the partnership, local churches were also able to contribute funds or purchase supplies as well as locating potential work locations throughout the city. Brainerd Baptist Church was mentioned for not only feeding participants breakfast and dinner daily but also offering their facility for lodging. Local disaster relief volunteers and churches supplied and supervised shower trailers.

The impact of WC partnering with Chattanooga was viewed as mostly positive by all participants. Community members focused more on the benefits to the community through the work being done to improve neighborhoods and the sources of local support such as businesses and neighborhood organizations. Ministry leaders, especially those who have brought students to the project, acknowledged that the length of the partnership contributes to making it run more smoothly. They also acknowledged the importance of local businesses assisting with making the participants' stay in the city acceptable. Some of the greatest benefits they noted are the benefit of having a ready-made mission trip available and the impact they have seen the trip have on their students when they have participated. Those who serve in staff and leadership roles with WC related the many different logistical considerations that must be undertaken both before and during the project. Since they are involved in the one-on-one dealings with local leaders, this perspective offers key elements of benefits and potential areas of conflict.

This study confirms the theory that long-term partnerships can be used to build meaningful relationships within a community. In the case of the WC partnership with the city of Chattanooga, these relationships exist on multiple levels. The first is that of the WC organization with the leadership of the city as well as with other community groups. This relationship forms through a mutual commitment to meet the needs of less-fortunate community homeowners who need repairs done to their houses as the partner groups work to obtain funding and supplies to

address those issues. Second, there are relationships built with local churches and businesses. For churches, the partnership offers an opportunity to serve not only the community but also the WC project participants. The exposure provided to church members can offer new outreach into the communities where repairs are being done. Local businesses receive positive publicity by offering items needed to complete the project, whether that is food, building supplies, or other needs such as portable toilet and shower facilities. WC teams have the opportunity to build personal relationships with community members as the participants repair their homes and associate with other people in the neighborhoods.

### ***Issues that Can Impede Long-Term Partnership Success without Adequate Consideration***

RQ4 collected information from participants related to their perceptions of areas of concern that could be addressed to encourage success as the partnership develops. This information is useful to create a set of suggestions for those interested in trying to undertake the planning and coordination of a partnership that encourages mission outreach within a local community. While the specific needs of those undertaking the formation of a partnership of this nature may vary, being aware of these potential areas that could impact the development and continued success of the project can better prepare leaders for challenges. The areas of concern are building relationships, communication and mediating expectations, cultural experience and preparation, and backup plans.

**Building Relationships.** One of the key areas that was mentioned by participants is the necessity of developing relationships within the community where the mission work is to be done. If this is not done effectively and efficiently, the partnership will struggle to become important to the community. Without these relationships, it will be difficult to get into the community, identify the needs to be met, and locate additional resources. For WC, this involved

reaching out to the local association of Baptist churches as well as individual churches. It also required making contacts with those in local government positions as well as other local organizations that assist with housing, social services, and community improvement. These initial relationships are necessary to assist with funding and identifying the needs of the community. If the partnership becomes long-term such as WC has with Chattanooga, these relationships can encourage continued presence and success. This was evidenced in the way that local churches stepped up to provide funding when government resources fell short at times. Local church involvement also provides ministry opportunities for these congregations as they serve the participants during the project but also have continued outreach to the communities where WC has worked.

Relationships with local businesses such as building supply stores and restaurants are also beneficial. It was noted in the data that using local businesses benefits all those involved. The example was given of purchasing donuts from a local shop rather than a national chain. This allowed the shop to profit financially and through publicity. Other examples were presented of building supply stores offering materials at a discount or even free of charge. These types of relationships could allow more work to be accomplished since the budget will stretch farther. They also provide positive exposure for the mission group among the community members and businesses, thus encouraging continued support.

**Communication and Mediating Expectations.** Another vital area to encourage the success of a mission partnership is communication. This must be an ongoing process. If communication is not adequately maintained between all the involved partner members, the successful completion of the determined goals will be hindered. Everyone involved needs to understand what is happening, how supplies are obtained, and the procedures in place to

complete the project. The mission organization needs to remain visible to the community in a positive manner if long-term involvement is going to be possible. This was recognized in Chattanooga after the COVID-19 pandemic. WC was unable to participate in its usual summer project in 2020 due to the pandemic. When WC finally returned to the city after its restructuring as a stand-alone non-profit, new leadership was in place, and there had been changes within the government of Chattanooga. As a result, some of the city leaders were not as familiar with the partnership, so they did not supply budget funding as had been done previously. Fortunately, local churches who had been working with the partnership through the years stepped in to purchase supplies and fund worksites. Continued communication among all involved parties can help prevent situations such as this as well as fill the gaps if they do arise.

It is also important for communication to be maintained with ministry leaders who will bring students to the project. This ties to mediating expectations as well. These leaders need as much information as possible to prepare their students for what they may encounter. This can include details about housing and food, types of jobs that will be done, and the community itself. Specific locations may have local regulations such as curfews that could impact how groups behave. In some cases, groups may decide to add time for recreation. Providing resources of local attractions, dining options, and even directions to Walmart will help leaders feel more comfortable. Ministry leaders will be more likely to continue to support mission organizations if they feel they are well-informed about the project(s) they attend.

Expectations can also arise from being in the same location for multiple years. Group leaders may come to expect certain accommodations or get caught in the mindset of how things were done in past years. They may compare one year's experience with a previous one, which could lead to positive or negative reactions. The community may begin to rely on the partnership

and neglect issues because there is a mindset that the mission organization will handle it. The partnership could begin to be viewed negatively if situations such as not completing work year after year becomes a problem. However, it was also noted that as the partnership continues and experience is gained, coordinators will become more skilled at selecting the jobs that can be accomplished during the time allotted for the project.

According to the data collected for RQ4, there is also the possibility of the city becoming comfortable and treating the mission group more as a company that has been hired to do work rather than as volunteers offering support. This needs to be addressed among partnership member leaders to maintain the mindset of volunteer but willing service. Communication with construction coordinators is necessary to mediate their expectations of how supplies will be obtained and delivered. According to the data gathered, this has been an issue for WC at times due to the complicated process the city requires. The length of time necessary to get materials has sometimes been frustrating for coordinators when they needed supplies immediately. Those volunteering to serve in leadership capacities for the project need to be made aware of how things will be handled to prevent frustration.

**Cultural Experience and Preparation.** The data indicated that an area of concern is better preparing participants for the cultural differences they may encounter during the WC project. It is possible they will encounter people and situations that are out of their comfort zones of what they are used to at home. This could be unnerving or frightening if they are not expecting to experience those differences. The suggestion was offered that group leaders need to research the area, reach out to local coordinators, and prepare their students ahead of time. It may also be necessary to be aware of community rules or expectations such as curfews or students needing chaperones when in public places. Having the ability to reach out to local ministry

contacts would be beneficial to assist in learning more about the community where the students will be serving.

WC leadership agreed that it is important for youth groups to help students get ready for the project they will be undertaking. Of note was the reflection from Respondent N that many of the churches who attend WC are Caucasian Baptist churches. WC often works in low-income neighborhoods in cities like Chattanooga, so the community dynamics may be very different than students experience at home. A suggestion is to help participants understand they may encounter a culture different than what they are used to. They may need to become more self-aware about how they act and speak to better reach the residents of the community.

Another suggestion related to culture is to guide students to an understanding that their role is not to change the community culture into their own. Instead, the role of the mission project participants is to minister to the needs. As this is done, it is also necessary to offer opportunities for the community to maintain its dignity by contributing. Building relationships with local businesses, outreach organizations, and churches can foster this dimension of the project.

**Backup Plans.** Multiple participants noted that it is necessary to create backup plans in case the project doesn't go exactly as expected. By developing these plans before problems arise, it will be easier to mitigate negative situations. Sometimes, these plans are not publicized to the project participants unless needed. However, suggestions were to have plans in place for several situations. The first is in case of inclement or violent weather. Since home repairs are the main activity of WC, periods of rain will impact completion. Work crews need to be prepared to do other things if their work is impeded by weather. This could provide opportunity for outreach and witnessing if the group visits neighbors or moves to a public location such as a shopping

mall. In the case of severe weather, adults leading work crews need to know how to react.

Another situation that requires backup plans is if work crews are not able to complete their home projects in the allotted time. Those involved in the organization and planning process need to have a way to finish the work. This might include having local volunteers who will complete the repairs. It is also possible that the repairs may not remain intact after the crews leave. In this situation, it will be necessary to have a group of local community members who are willing to determine the problem and remedy it. This ties back to building relationships within the community and among local churches since it is an area of ministry that can be continued even while WC is not physically present in the city.

### **Implications**

Based on the data collected and the literature studied, this researcher feels that there are specific suggestions for those desiring to try to initiate a partnership with a local community to offer mission opportunities for students. These suggestions can be correlated with the 12-step process devised by Dang et al. (2017). While their study considered a medical partnership with an academic institution, the process could be useful for other mission partnerships as well. This section will use those steps as headings with a description following how it relates to the study conclusions.

### ***Conceptualizing and Building on an Idea***

The initial step must be to decide on the type of partnership to be created and what the desired outcome will be. For WC, the desire is to create a hands-on mission experience for students while offering needed support to a local community. However, before any project is initiated, it is necessary to determine exactly what that project is going to be.

### ***Conducting a Needs Assessment/ Seeking Guidance and Support, and Convening a Planning Team***

Before work can begin, the desired location must be assessed to determine if there is even a need for the mission work. Making contacts with local leadership, churches, and other groups is a vital step to gain insight into the community and what might be vital to the success of the partnership and the work to be accomplished. This is not a step that will be done quickly. As one of the WC leadership participants noted, reaching the point of carrying out the work will take a lot of time, perhaps years. It should not be rushed because there will be a greater chance for unexpected snags that impede success and the ability of the partnership to continue.

### ***Collaborating with Organizations***

Through the data analysis, the importance of collaborating with other organizations was established as one of the most frequent benefits to a long-term partnership. Reaching out to businesses, churches, and community groups as well as the local government will provide a wider range of resources. Gaining support from people who are already invested and involved in the community can provide a positive image that may assist in reaching the community members and better meeting their needs. Businesses may offer supplies such as food or building materials for less cost than usual or as donations. This enables the budget to stretch further and offers them positive publicity within the community.

### ***Ensuring Compliance with Legal and Liability Guidelines***

Especially when working in partnership with local government, it will be necessary to be aware of any legal and liability guidelines. WC focuses on home repair, so if one were to start a similar type of partnership, knowing and understanding building codes would be essential. In some cases, it might be useful to engage and recruit local building contractors to assist in

ensuring the work is done correctly.

Another area of concern is insurance. The data demonstrated that this was something that can be impacted depending on if the mission organization is under a larger entity or is a stand-alone non-profit group. One of the WC leaders mentioned that as a stand-alone, their financial value was much less than when WC was a division of a national organization. As a result, it might not be as attractive to bring court charges against them. However, they also must cover insurance liabilities somehow, so part of that cost is passed on to participants via their registration fees.

Localities may also have guidelines that must be followed pertaining to the use of budgeted funds or ordering and procuring materials. This could impact how the work is accomplished and what projects are possible. Much research should be conducted into these topics before inviting participants to a project site is attempted.

### ***Promoting the Mission and Recruiting and Training Volunteers***

Volunteers for the mission partnership will occur in two phases. The first is to find individuals who are willing to act as supervisors and consultants for the work to be accomplished. These could be local experts (such as building contractors as an example for WC) or others who are willing to be trained. This is an area where local churches will be vital since they can assist with feeding participants and offering other assistance as needed including potential coordinators. Offering them an opportunity to participate expands their ministry in the community as well.

The second phase is to recruit youth leaders who will bring their students to the project to experience hands-on mission work. This may take time and require multiple contacts and forms of publicity. One of the WC leaders mentioned that when the idea of attending a WC project was

first presented in his career as a youth minister, there was a reluctance to participate. However, this individual eventually did take students to a WC site and is now in a leadership role with the organization. Perseverance may be required to get others on board with regards to traveling to the location as well as paying registration fees.

### ***Adopting an Intervention Plan and Guideline***

As mentioned previously, it is essential that backup plans are developed before the project begins or trouble arises. This plan needs to be jointly created by all the key leadership in the partner organizations. Considerations should be made for weather impacts, supply issues, work not completed, and any other emergencies that may arise. There should be a plan in case individuals leading crews to complete work are called away. Contingencies should be made for obtaining additional supplies if unforeseen circumstances require additional work to be done. Backup sources for food should be arranged in case a church that has committed to helping must back out for some reason. It would be useful to also determine if there is a backup location to house participants in case there is a conflict or problem.

### ***Putting It All Together/Implementing the Mission***

Once sufficient time has been spent doing background research, making contacts with as many community representatives as possible, determining how to house and feed participants, obtaining sources for supplies, and recruiting volunteers both to assist and to attend, the project can be put together and initiated. As previously mentioned, this is not something that should be rushed. It is not feasible to expect to come up with an idea to develop such a partnership and immediately begin the work. Allowing adequate time and planning will help ensure that the first experiences will be successful and lead to future opportunities to serve the community.

### ***Follow-Up and Evaluation***

After the project is completed each time, there should be a method in place to evaluate what happened. WC allows group leaders to complete an evaluation form at the end of the week. This information is combined with the experiences of others who are involved in the project to determine what changes may be necessary to improve the next year. Having good communication between the partnership members will allow honest evaluation of the work done, how it was accomplished, and what needs to be addressed in the future. This process may not be easy, especially in the early years of establishing the partnership. However, to create an environment that fosters a long-term relationship, it is vital that pros and cons are considered.

### **Further Applications**

While the focus of this study was to examine the long-term partnership between a mission organization that provides experiences for youth to serve and a specific community, the information could also be used to assist in forming other types of partnerships. As noted previously, it is not uncommon for educational institutions to develop opportunities for students to put into practice what they are learning in the classroom. One example would be an agriculture program working with local farmers to provide students opportunities to take their classroom learning to real-life situations as well as potentially conducting research to determine best practices. Another example is a college that promotes a day of service within the community. Developing partnerships with local organizations can provide locations for students to serve.

At times, real-life experiences may be used as civic or social problem-solving lessons. The results of the perceived benefits and potential pitfalls from this research could be beneficial for educational leaders wanting to consider forming a partnership within their community or with

another organization to give students hands-on opportunities. The data gathered and analysis offer suggestions of areas to address as well as things to consider that could impede a successful project and partnership. Using the research, leaders can be better prepared to determine potential partners, create a plan for the project, and consider important factors such as funding, goals, and student preparation.

The results of this research study can also provide guidance to communities or organizations seeking to find partner groups to address needs. If outside participants are to come into an area to serve, they will have requirements such as housing and food as appeared in the study results. There also needs to be planning for funding and supplies if the desired goals require such materials. Developing a positive presence in the community can be better achieved if local leadership demonstrates their commitment and willingness to work within the partnership and help ensure the goals are met. Although this study considered a Christian partner organization, communities may develop partnerships with other service-oriented groups or institutions such as colleges and universities that have resources to contribute.

The animosity toward religion seems to be increasing in today's world. This study revealed that there are other ways for Christians to get into communities, share God's love, and demonstrate Jesus through the expression of the Fruit of the Spirit. As previously mentioned in Chapter Two, van Engen (2019) suggests that "there is an urgent need to discover and create new patterns of missionary partnership among Christians worldwide" (p. 53). Partnerships between Christian organizations and local communities, especially those that develop into long-term relationships, provide just that. God is demonstrated through the work being done, the commitment to serve, and the willingness to meet the needs of the people who live there. 1 John 3:18 states that Christians should "not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth."

Cross-sector partnerships such as the one examined in this study provide opportunities to act in such a way, joining with community organizations already in place to reach out, pool resources, and aid more local residents. As the love of Christ is exemplified through meeting the needs of the community, doors to evangelism may open as well.

### **Final Considerations**

This study provided information to assist groups wanting to start a partnership to offer mission services with the goal of establishing a long-term presence. WC began under the umbrella of a larger mission-based organization and eventually transitioned to an NGO operated as a non-profit. The recommendations determined from the data analysis could be used by any size group trying to build a relationship in a community to minister through service. However, it would most likely be more difficult (though not impossible) for an individual church. The amount of resources and planning needed in the beginning stages might be a hindrance for smaller groups. It would be easier for several churches or an association to gather a leadership team that could begin the contacting and negotiations with community leaders to open doors for ministry. A single church might be able to develop a similar outreach within their own community, though, and the information presented in this study could be used to assist in forming partnerships with other local organizations to meet needs of the community members. A church might also find a group such as an orphanage, a rehabilitation center, or a homeless shelter with which to partner, whether locally or in another location. The recommendations and information resulting from this research study could prove valuable in the planning, organizing, and ministry of the partnership. This would also allow the church to offer its members opportunities to put faith into action through service and additional ways to share God's love and the Gospel.

It is important to recognize that the long-term partnership used for this research has been in place for almost 20 years. Even though WC is a Christian organization, they have been able to maintain a relationship with Chattanooga that allows the sharing of the Gospel while continuing to meet the needs of the community. Although the government of the city and some of the businesses involved in supplying resources are not Christian oriented, the partnership has been successful. This demonstrates that it is possible for Christian groups to work with those who are not, meeting the needs of the community and sharing the love of Christ while the work is accomplished. The partnership has also provided local churches with opportunities to be part of the greater mission. For some, this has been accomplished through supporting the participants of the project with food, housing, or other necessities such as shower trailers. At times, the local churches have also been able to form relationships with the homeowners being served and have provided for other needs that were identified. These outreach experiences allow the local churches to stay relevant and visible within their own communities and provide another means for them to participate in the commandment and commission discussed in Chapter Two.

### **Research Limitations**

Due to the use of the case study format for research, the greatest limitation is that all data collected was limited to a single location, the city of Chattanooga. The results gathered are specific to that city and the individuals involved with the WC partnership there. WC works throughout the United States in many different locations, so the results of studying a partnership in a different location could lead to varying levels of agreement or other areas of focus than that gathered through this researcher's work.

The study did not include gender or ethnicity as relevant to the study. Participants were offered the opportunity to contribute to the research based on experience with the WC

partnership and the work it has accomplished in Chattanooga. Other personal characteristics were not used as distinguishing factors in data analysis.

The research also gathered data from adults who were connected to the WC partnership in some manner. Students who have participated in the Chattanooga project were not included. It is possible that they would have other perspectives to the management and coordination of the project.

Finally, it should be noted that this study focused on a partnership created between a specific location and a religious mission-oriented NGO. This NGO began as a division of the North American Mission Board and was later transferred to Lifeway Christian Resources, a for-profit company. After Lifeway made the decision to end WC, it was acquired by a group of individuals and re-established as a non-profit stand-alone organization. As a result, the study is limited to its focus on a partnership developed with this type of organization. Other partnership situations could yield different data.

### **Further Research**

This study focused on a single city and the long-term partnership that has been established with WC. Since WC has developed similar partnerships in other locations, by conducting additional research in different cities where WC is active, the conclusions of this research could be confirmed or expanded. Do all locations structure the administrative tasks in the same way? Are there other methods for selecting which homes receive repairs? What types of funding are available in other cities? Such research could be helpful to develop further suggestions to aid groups interested in trying to begin a mission partnership with a locality. Having a wider range of possible scenarios, resources, and management ideas could be beneficial.

Another area of possible research would be a study of how homeowners and others in their neighborhoods feel they benefitted by having WC working on their homes. This study collected some feedback from community members using document sources such as the local newspaper. However, that only presented a brief snapshot, usually during the time that WC was in the area working. Further research into how the community perceives the work after it is finished and some time has passed could yield valuable insights into the overall importance and impact of long-term partnerships. Did the work have an impact on the homeowner and the neighborhood after time had passed?

Due to the WC/Chattanooga partnership having been established for so long, it might also be interesting to study if the impact on project participants is different than on individuals who take part in similar mission experiences that do not have a long-term partnership. For example, WC offers projects in other cities that have not been partners for at least ten years. Is there a difference in how participants perceive the impact of such projects? If youth groups return to the same location year after year, does that affect the impact on participants differently than if they ministered in a new city each year? This theme has many variations that could be studied to determine if and/or how long-term partnerships contribute to the overall impacts on the youth who participate.

The final area of further research is to conduct similar studies with other organizations like WC that create student-centered mission experiences. Not all student mission work involves construction and home repairs. Depending on the type of mission work being undertaken, the logistical requirements and planning could be different. Other locations may have needs that vary from what WC has found in Chattanooga. Having a greater amount of data and more perspectives could offer insight for groups that would like to start a mission project and/or

partnership but aren't sure how to begin. Presenting a wide range of situations and resources could be beneficial.

### **Summary**

This study examined a specific mission partnership that is considered long-term due to being established in 2004 and continuing to the present. The mission organization involved, World Changers, works in cities throughout the United States, offering youth leaders the opportunity to give their students a hands-on mission experience. During the research, participants from three different stakeholder groups were recruited to offer insights into their perceptions of benefits from the partnership as well as potential areas that could contribute to or impede the success of the work being done. This chapter has described the theoretical, empirical, and practical implications gathered from the data that was collected. While the data collected is limited to the perceptions of a unique partnership between a specific mission organization and city, the implications could be adapted to apply to other partnerships.

The final section of this chapter provided suggestions for developing a similar partnership using the 12 steps outlined by Dang et al. (2017). As a result of the study, there is information available to assist groups interested in working toward building a partnership that provides community support. The suggestions that resulted from the research offer potential areas of concern that could hinder a successful partnership as well as the most important connections and logistics to consider first. This researcher hopes that the conclusions presented will assist other groups wanting to create similar partnerships to address community needs and possibly offer mission opportunities for students to put their faith into action through service. As the world continues to change and seems to move away from God, offering opportunities for Christians, especially youth, to join together to make a difference grows even more important. The basic needs

of people in communities can be met if groups will develop partnerships such as World Changers has with Chattanooga to offer aid. Providing opportunities for students to put their faith into action and see the results can inspire them to live a life devoted to becoming more like Christ, sharing God's love, and showing the Fruit of the Spirit to the world around them.

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**APPENDIX A**

## IRB Approval Document

**LIBERTY UNIVERSITY**  
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

March 17, 2022

Rebecca Bishop Stephen Grusendorf

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY21-22-569 Long-Term Partnerships Between Communities and Mission Organizations: A Case Study

Dear Rebecca Bishop, Stephen Grusendorf,

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 to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under the following exemption category, which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:104(d):

Category 2.(iii). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:

The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by §46.111(a)(7).

Your stamped consent form(s) and final versions of your study documents can be found under the Attachments tab within the Submission Details section of your study on Cayuse IRB. Your stamped consent form(s) should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document(s) should be made available without alteration.

Please note that this exemption 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 exemption status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at

██████████.

Sincerely,  
G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP  
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research  
Research Ethics Office

## APPENDIX B

### Informed Consent Agreement

#### **Informed Consent Form**

**Title of the Project:** Long-term Partnerships Between Communities and Mission Organizations: A Case Study

**Principal Investigator:** Rebecca (Becki) Bishop, Doctoral Candidate, Liberty University

#### **Invitation to be Part of a Research Study**

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be 18 years of age or older and be familiar with the long-term partnership between the community of Chattanooga, Tennessee and the World Changers mission organization. Taking part in this research project is voluntary. Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research.

#### **What is the study about and why is it being done?**

The purpose of the study is to explore the long-term partnerships of World Changers with the city of Chattanooga, Tennessee to establish best practices for creating similar partnerships involving short-term mission work, particularly for youth. By examining the ongoing partnership between the mission organization and the community, the study intends to develop suggestions to improve success and to avoid potential pitfalls when similar partnerships are undertaken.

#### **What will happen if you take part in this study?**

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following things:

1. Complete an open-ended question survey regarding your experiences with the World Changers/Chattanooga partnership. This survey will consist of five questions requiring written responses. The survey can be completed in less than an hour depending on the length of your responses.
2. **Optional:** Participate in an audio recorded personal interview with me either by phone, video conferencing, or in person. This will be scheduled at your convenience and will last at minimum half an hour to ensure thoroughness.
3. Review the transcript of the personal interview to check for accuracy and understanding.

#### **How could you or others benefit from this study?**

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study. Benefits to society include suggestions for developing partnerships between mission organizations and communities, particularly those that offer hands-on experiences for youth to put faith into action.

### **What risks might you experience from being in this study?**

The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

### **How will personal information be protected?**

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research 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.

- Survey responses will be anonymous.
- Interview participant responses will be kept confidential through the use of codes.
- Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and in a secure folder on the device. Data may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.
- Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer in a secure folder for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.

### **Is study participation voluntary?**

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University, World Changers, or the community of Chattanooga. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time prior to submitting the survey without affecting those relationships.

### **What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?**

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please exit the survey and close your internet browser. Your responses will not be recorded or included in the study. If you participate in the interview and would like to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher using the information below. Your responses will not be included in the study.

### **Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?**

The researcher conducting this study is Rebecca (Becki) Bishop. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at [REDACTED] and/or [REDACTED]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Stephen Grusendorf, at [REDACTED].

**Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?**

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, [REDACTED] or email at [REDACTED].

*Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.*

**Your Consent**

Before agreeing to be part of the research, please be sure that you understand what the study is about. You can print a copy of the document for your records. If you have any questions about the study later, you can contact the researcher using the information provided above.

*I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.*

The researcher has my permission to audio-record me as part of my participation in this study.

\_\_\_\_\_ Printed Subject Name

\_\_\_\_\_ Signature & Date

## APPENDIX C

### Survey Questions

The purpose of this open-ended question survey is to collect data related to the partnership between the World Changers organization and the community of Chattanooga, Tennessee. Please be as thorough as possible and answer honestly based on your perspective and the role(s) you have played in performing the tasks associated with the partnership. You may choose to exit the survey at any point. If you choose to do so, your responses will not be recorded. Your personal information will not be disclosed, and all data will be securely stored for three years.

Question #1: Please describe your role(s) within the partnership between the Chattanooga community and World Changers. Include your year(s) of participation, with which partner member you are associated, and specific details related to the role(s) you have performed.

Question #2: Please describe the impact you perceive for the community by continuing to work within this partnership. Are there benefits to community organizations, local leaders, and/or community members? Are there any negative impacts due to the partnership's work and continued presence that need to be considered or discussed to improve the overall experience for those involved?

Question #3: Please describe the impact you perceive for World Changers as the mission organization involved in the partnership. Are there benefits to continuing to work within the same community? How does the partnership impact the logistics for offering youth mission experiences? Are there any negative aspects that need to be considered or discussed to improve the overall experience for those involved?

Question #4: Please describe the impact you perceive for those involved in the ministry aspect of the partnership. How do youth leaders view the arrangements for bringing youth to the area for hands-on mission experiences? Does having a long-term partnership in place offer any beneficial or negative effect? How does the partnership and planning for the mission opportunities effect local ministry leaders and their organizations? Are there any negative aspects to be considered or discussed to improve the overall experience for those involved?

Question #5: If you were advising a mission organization and community in the process of beginning to develop a partnership such as the one between World Changers and Chattanooga, what would be the most important considerations? Are there potential pitfalls that could arise which might be avoided through prior planning? Are there benefits to operating within such a partnership? In your own experience, what works well and what could be better with modifications? This information will serve to help develop guidelines to direct others seeking to undertake this kind of partnership, so please be as thorough and honest as you can.

The researcher would like to follow-up with a personal interview to gather more details and better understand your responses. This will be conducted by phone, by video, or in person. If you

would be willing to participate in such an interview, please include your personal contact information below for her to make arrangements with you.

## APPENDIX D

### Interview Guide

As a follow-up to the data received from the online survey, personal interviews will be conducted with participants who are willing. These will be recorded using audio equipment and then transcribed. Specific questions will be derived from the survey question responses. The interview will follow this general guide.

- I. Introductions
  - A. Interviewer
  - B. Interviewee
    1. Partnership organization affiliation
    2. Role(s) performed within partnership experience
    3. Years of involvement with partnership and its organizations
- II. Questions related to community impact
  - A. Questions about benefits of having partnership
  - B. Questions about negative aspects of having partnership
  - C. Questions about specific elements pertaining to community
- III. Questions related to mission organization
  - A. Questions about benefits of having partnership
  - B. Questions about negative impacts of having partnership
  - C. Questions about specific elements pertaining to mission organization
- IV. Questions related to ministry partners and leaders
  - A. Questions about benefits of having partnership
  - B. Questions about negative aspects of having partnership
  - C. Questions about specific elements pertaining to ministry partners and leaders
- V. Questions related to developing recommendations for others
  - A. Questions about overall benefits to developing this type of relationship
  - B. Questions about potential pitfalls that might arise

## APPENDIX E

### Introductory Letter

Dear Recipient:

As a graduate student in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Ph.D. degree. The purpose of my research is to examine a long-term partnership between the community of Chattanooga, Tennessee and World Changers mission organization. The research will evaluate the benefits and negative aspects of this partnership with the intent to develop suggestions for other groups who may wish to establish similar partnerships, and I am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study.

Participants must be 18 years of age or older and have experience with the partnership through association with one of the membership organizations or as a former participant at one of the projects conducted in Chattanooga. Participants, if willing, will be asked to complete an online open-ended question survey as well as participate in a personal interview with the researcher. It should take approximately no more than four hours total to complete the procedures listed. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential.

To participate, please click here <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/8V9LSHC> to complete the initial survey. Contact information will be requested at the end of the survey to arrange a personal interview. Please contact me at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] if you have any questions prior to participating.

A consent document is provided as the first page of the survey. The consent document contains additional information about my research. After you have read the consent form, please click the link to proceed to the survey. Doing so will indicate that you have read the consent information and would like to take part in the survey.

Sincerely,

Rebecca (Becki) Bishop  
Graduate Student

[REDACTED]

## APPENDIX F

### Interview Questions

#### Interview #1:

1. A lot of people, when they find out what I'm focusing on, the first thing that they say, how are the projects chosen? And I know each city is different, but who makes the decisions? Where do they get all their supplies, the money to get the supplies?
2. What kind of feedback have you received from the homeowners, the community leaders, ministry leaders in the area, both about the actual projects, but also about the whole process and having WC there?
3. What do you think for the local church community? What is the benefit?
4. The leadership of WC has gone from the Home/North American Mission Board to Lifeway to its current state. How do you think those changes have impacted the partnerships and the way things are managed between WC and the local communities?
5. If someone were wanting to start this type of relationship in a community, what would be your key advice to them? What are things they should be aware of, problems that could arise, all of that sort of stuff?
6. Who would be the best people to seek out to try to start getting those wheels turning?
7. What are the biggest pitfalls that you think people should maybe be aware could come or that they might want to look out for and try to avoid before they get there and have a problem?
8. Do you have any other words of wisdom?

#### Interview #2:

1. Who would be the first people or groups that you think you should contact if you start thinking we might want to do this? Who would you reach out to first in the area to try to set something up?
2. Because I was looking at Chattanooga as a long-term partnership, what are the benefits of having that? But also, what are the potential negatives of that long-term presence in the community?
3. Did those situations (referencing examples of problems encountered) give negative publicity? Is having local people and businesses on board a benefit?
4. As for church groups coming to WC, what do you see as positives and negatives for the groups? And is it different when they go to different cities each year versus the same one multiple times?
5. With regard to going outside of the immediate city, what kinds of things would have to be considered?
6. Someone mentioned the long-term presence in the community has the potential it would become more like a process of giving out handouts as opposed to a ministry project. Do you have any thoughts about that?
7. Going into a community, as far as the culture of the community, what sorts of things do people need to understand as they're going out to do these projects and who could be beneficial to help the coordinators make sure that's expressed.
8. (In reference to comment about local support being important to how projects go) Not just government officials, right?

9. What do you see as the key pieces of trying to set up relationships to do ministry versus when it was under the umbrella of the mission board or Lifeway? What sorts of things need to be considered if you're going to do it as a standalone?
10. When you're setting up all of the logistics like getting churches to feed and housing and all, how do you even start with that?

### Interview #3

1. In your opinion, having that established partnership, what do you think is the impact of that compared to if you were to go into a community and decide you're going to start the same sort of program?
2. Do you think having project managers that are local and more familiar would be a benefit instead of a person who doesn't live anywhere nearby (referencing cultural considerations)?
3. If you were starting this kind of thing, what do you think would be the key relationships to come to first? What are the most essential or beneficial relationships to start building before you ever set foot out there trying to work?
4. One comment talked about potential for lack of consistency and plans falling through. What kinds of things do you think could help prevent that? Or if something were to happen, how could you not have everything just come crashing down in the future, too?
5. What are the benefits or negatives for a church group to go to the same location multiple times?
6. (Referencing comment about going out of immediate city area) What kinds of things do you think should be considered?
7. Now WC is its own nonprofit entity rather than under a larger umbrella. How does that impact stuff do you think? What is your perspective?
8. It was mentioned in surveys about the potential that people may start seeing it as just a way to get handouts more than the purpose. What are your thoughts on that?

## APPENDIX G

### List of Participants

Respondent	Type of Response	Relationship to Partnership	Years Involved
A	Survey	Community Member	8 Years (no dates given)
B	Survey	WC Leadership	2013-2022
C	Survey	Community Member/WC Leadership	2004-Present
D	Survey	Community Member/WC Leadership	2018-Present
E	Survey	Ministry Leader (Brought Students to Project)	2014-Present, 7 trips, 1 in Chattanooga
F	Survey	WC Leadership	2016
G	Survey	Ministry Leader (Brought students to project)	8+ Years (no dates given)
H	Survey	Community Member	2013-2019
I	Survey	WC Leadership	2003-2016
J	Survey	Ministry Leader (Brought students to project)	2004-Present, 12 trips, 1 in Chattanooga
K	Survey	Ministry Leader (Local)/Community Member	Did not specify dates
L	Interview (7/18/22)	WC National Leadership	Did not specify begin date-Present
M	Ride-along (7/19/22)	WC Leadership/Former Community Member	2004-Present
N	Interview (8/24/22)	WC Summer Staffer	2020-2021
O	Interview (9/8/22)	WC National Leadership (retired)	2004-unspecified end date

## APPENDIX H

### List of Documents and Media Used in Data Collection

Date	Source	Title or Other Identifying Information
4/12/04	CTFP Article	Group Will Repair Inner-City Houses—World Changers Youth Volunteers Working to Bring Homes Up to Code
7/7/04	CTFP Article	World Changers Changing Lives—Teenagers, Adults Help Repair Homes
6/18/04	CTFP Article	World Changers Team to Help Fix Up City Homes in July
7/18/04	CTFP Article	50 Homes Repaired by World Changers
7/26/05	CTFP Letter	Letters to the Editor
7/15/06	CTFP Letter	Baptist Teens Renovate Homes
7/18/07	US Federal News Service	Press Release by City of Chattanooga
7/23/07	SBGTV	News Story Transcript
7/25/07	Chattanooga.com	World Changers Rehabbing 30 Homes in Chattanooga
7/26/07	CTFP Article	Teens Tackle Home Repairs—World Changers Ministry Offers Its Services to Local Residents
7/29/07	CTFP (BN)	Mayor recognizes World Changers
2/1/08	CTFP Article	A Helping Hand with Home Repairs
7/15/08	SBGTV	News Story Transcript
7/25/09	CTFP Article	World Changers Bringing Help Home
7/13/10	SBGTV	News Story Transcript
7/22/10	CTFP Article	Group Changing World House By House
7/22/11	CTFP Article	Changing the World—Teens Repairing East Ridge Homes
9/23/11	CTFP Article	Remarks About City Plan Due Tuesday
7/11/12	WTVC	News Story Transcript
8/19/12	CTFP Article	World Changers Help Families' Lives Improve
7/18/13	CTFP Article	Hundreds of Helping Hands—Teenagers Renovate Area Homes as Part of World Changers
7/22/13	CTFP Article	Meals on Wheels Cuts Slow Deliveries—Sequestration Forces Program to Seek New Funding Sources
7/28/13	CTFP Letter	Chick-Fil-A Helping to Change the World
7/28/13	CTFP (OpEd)	The Readers Write
7/17/14	CTFP Article	Changing the World—Hundreds of Volunteers Repairing Homes, Lives in City
8/14/14	CTFP (OpEd)	Your Community/Your Voice Column
7/23/16	CTFP Article	On a Mission—World Changers Pay to Help Others While Spreading the Gospel
7/7/17	CTFP Article	World Changers Plan to Begin Home Repair Program Next Week
7/16/17	CTFP Article	Fixing Houses Changing Lives
7/18/17	CTFP Article	Neighbors Helping Neighbors
6/18/19	CTFP Article	Volunteers Come to Town for Mission Work
7/8/22	OCRPP Document	<a href="https://recovery.chattanooga.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/ARP-Presentation-to-Council-7.19.pdf">https://recovery.chattanooga.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/ARP-Presentation-to-Council-7.19.pdf</a>
7/18/22	Respondent L	Interview Transcript
7/19/22	Respondent M	Ride-Along Notes
8/24/22	Respondent N	Interview Transcript
9/8/22	Respondent O	Interview Transcript

## APPENDIX I

### List of Headings Used for Data Coding

Logistical Considerations and Impacts (concepts related to the planning and implementation of the project)

- Funding Considerations (What are the sources of money and supplies? How does this impact the work being done?)
- Local Opportunity to Be Involved (How will the local community play a role in the work of the project? What opportunities are available for them to participate?)
- Housing/Food for Participants (How will the needs of the participants be fulfilled through lodging and meals?)
- Local Churches Role (Will the local churches be involved and what roles will they play?)
- Organizational Structure Impacts (Does the internal structure of the mission group impact the management of the partnership?)
- Staying within City Versus Moving Farther Out (Is it possible to spread out farther into the community to provide assistance to other areas?)
- Backup Plans (What plans are in place in case of problems that arise or if the work cannot be completed on time?)
- Communication (What is the importance of communication among partners as well as with participants, how is it achieved, and what kinds of information need to be shared?)
- First Relationships to Build (Where should a group start if they want to begin a partnership such as the one WC and Chattanooga have?)
- Mediating Expectations (What is important for partnership members as well as those coming to participate to know and understand to support a successful project?)

Community Considerations and Impacts (How does the partnership and its work impact the community? What is important to provide a more positive experience for all involved?)

- Community Relationships (What types of relationships are built within the community and what impact do these make?)
- Meeting the Needs of the Community (What needs does the community have that the partnership can address? What should be taken into consideration when addressing those needs?)

- Cultural Considerations (How can participants prepare for the different types of people they may encounter and the cultures they represent? What specific areas should be taken into account to minimize situations that could cause conflict?)
- Local Opportunity to Be Involved (How can local groups and individuals support the participants directly or indirectly?)
- Pitfalls of Returning to Same Location (Are there pitfalls to returning to the same location? This could be either for the partnership or for participants who come multiple years to Chattanooga.)
- Benefits of Returning to Same Location (Are there benefits to returning to the same location? As with pitfalls, this could impact the partnership or the participants.)
  - Local Knowledge (How can being familiar with the location or having individuals who have supported the project previously benefit the partnership?)
  - Benefits of Continued Presence (Are there benefits to maintaining a continued presence in the community through a long-term partnership?)

Spiritual Considerations and Impacts (What are the spiritual impacts to the community and to the participants? Is there a benefit to bringing students to the project?)

- Impact on Participants (How are those who participate impacted by attending the project and serving on mission teams to repair homes?)
  - Showing Faith/Jesus through Action (How does the WC/Chattanooga partnership offer opportunities for participants to show their faith and share the love of Christ?)

APPENDIX J

World Changer Survey Data 2022 (Provided by WC National Staff)

Chattanooga, Tennessee										Overall	Notable Comments	4.8514883
Registration	4	5	5	4	5	5	4	5	5		4.6 wasn't sure how to edit info	
PC												
Comm. before	5	5	5	4	5	5	4	5	5		4.8	
Comm. during	5	5	5	4	5	5	4	5	5		4.8	
Accessibility & responsiveness	5	5	5	4	5	5	4	5	5		4.8	
Here to Serve	5	5	5	4	5	5	4	5	5		4.8	
SC												
Comm. before	5	5	5	4	5	5	4	5	5		4.8	
Comm. during	5	5	5	4	5	5	4	5	5		4.8	
Accessibility & responsiveness	5	5	5	4	5	5	4	5	5		4.8	
Lunch quality & on time	5	5	5	4	5	5	4	5	5		4.8	
Here to Serve	5	5	5	4	5	5	4	5	5		4.8	
Program												
Schedule	4	5	4	4	5	4	4	5	5		4.4 make sure adults understand they are also expected to work	
Gathering	3	4	5	4	5	4	4	5	5		4.2	
Gospel Engagement	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5		4.6	
Audio quality	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5		4.8	
Video quality	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5		4.8	
StagePro	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5		4.8	
Church Devos	4	5	2	5	4	5	4	5	5		4 make different versions for 5/6/7 day	
Pre-Project	0	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5		4	
Speaker												
Topic	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5		4.8	
Connected	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5		4.6 didn't connect well	
Theme	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5		4.8	
Bible	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5		5	
Applications	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5		4.6	
SS												
access	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5		5	
Here to serve	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5		5	
Staff Engaging	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5		4.33333	
Food												
Quality	4	5	3	5	4	5	4	5	4		4.2	
Timeliness	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5		5	
Use again?	5	5	0	5	5	0	5	5	5		4	
Lodging												
Quality	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	5		4.6	
Use again?	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5		5	
Spiritual Transformation	4										4.33333	