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Getting Your Feet Wet Without Drowning:
Transformational Change in Adolescents
from Domestic Short-Term Missions

By
Andrew Stern

A Dissertation Submitted to
the Faculty of Covenant Theological Seminary
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Ministry.

Saint Louis, Missouri

2021

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Dr. Tasha Chapman
Faculty Advisor

_____

Jeremy Main
Second Reader

_____

Dr. Joel Hathaway
Director of DMin Program

_____

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine how church leaders who participated in a domestic short-term mission (STM) during high school engage local community needs years later. While STM is a prevalent and costly event in church youth ministry, little study has been done to measure the impact of adolescent STM on future church leaders.

This research utilized a qualitative design using semi-structured interviews with seven church leaders. As adolescents, they participated in a domestic STM. The interview analysis concluded that participants' domestic high school STM had significant immediate and long-lasting impact in their vocational calling, leadership development, work in their community, and biases around race and culture.

The literature review reveals that STM has a biblical basis. STM is evidenced in wall-building in Nehemiah 3. The impact of wall-building in Nehemiah 3 is transformational for both individuals and the community in Nehemiah 5. Literature also shows that STM has contemporary support and is transformational for adolescents.

Contemporary research concludes that STM is a cornerstone of church youth ministry. However, it is understudied. This study showed the importance of adolescent STM in revealing and affirming ministry calling and leadership gifting. This research affirmed that STM facilitates transformational learning when it is coupled with service learning practices, specifically analysis and reflection with adult host facilitators. This transformational learning broke down bias around race and culture. Neurobiological research affirms that adolescent brain development supports this transformational, perspective-changing learning during STM. Global learning objectives aid STM planning and evaluation but are underutilized. Church leaders who participated in domestic STM

advocate for STM because they value its role in beginning the process of breaking down bias. Their STM experiences fostered growth resulting in meeting local community needs in both individual and systemic manners.

Coinciding with recent STM research, this study affirms that domestic STM is better suited to adolescents when compared to international STM. Domestic STM provides sufficient but not overwhelming challenge to foster transformational learning for adolescents. As one participant said, adolescent domestic STM fosters "getting your feet wet without drowning."

To Katy, Rebekah, Hannah, Naomi, Miriam, Jacob, and Moses Stern:
My Favorite Short-Term Mission Companions

So we rebuilt the wall till all of it reached half its height, for the people worked with all their heart.

<div align="right">— Nehemiah's Memoirs 4:6</div>

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Abbreviations

GLO   Global Learning Objectives

SL   Service Learning

STM   Short-term Mission

TL   Transformational Learning

USA   United States of America

Chapter One

Introduction

"Is this worth the money?! Aren't we doing more harm than good? Isn't this just glorified tourism?" These oft-quoted critiques aimed at short-term mission (STM) continue popping up in church ministry discussions. STM began in USA evangelicalism in the 1960s.[1] As it developed, missiologists argued over whether these trips helped or harmed the people involved, both participants and hosts.[2] The overwhelming response in the 1980s and 1990s was pragmatic: STM trips create transformational impact on participants – meaning, those who travel to a new place on STM, not those who host and receive them. By the 2000s, the National Study of Youth and Religion had randomly surveyed over 3,300 adolescents in 2002 and found 28 percent had been participants on a STM.[3]

What has been the impact of STM on those who go on a STM? The results are mixed. Sociologist Kurt Alan Ver Beek found international STM participation did not impact the participants' future giving to the church or missionary causes.[4] However, Trinitapoli and Vaisey's study, using the National Study of Youth and Religion, found

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[1] Brian M. Howell, *Short-Term Mission: An Ethnography of Christian Travel Narrative and Experience* (InterVarsity Press, 2012). Page 79-83.

[2] Robert J Priest and Brian M Howell, "Introduction: Theme Issue on Short-Term Missions," *Missiology* 41, no. 2 (April 2013): 124–29, https://doi.org/10.1177/0091829613475744.

[3] Jenny Trinitapoli and Stephen Vaisey, "The Transformative Role of Religious Experience: The Case of Short-Term Missions," *Social Forces* 88, no. 1 (September 2009): 128, https://doi.org/10.1353/sof.0.0223.

[4] Kurt Alan Ver Beek, "The Impact of Short-Term Missions: A Case Study of House Construction in Honduras after Hurricane Mitch:," *Missiology* 34, no. 4 (2006): 477, https://doi.org/10.1177/009182960603400406.

that STM participants were more likely to volunteer than adolescents who did not participate in STM.[5] These days, churches question STM again because developmental economists argue that STM fosters dependency and paternalistic attitudes.[6]

Significance of the Study

Notably, STM study in the last twenty years has not focused on how current church leaders have been influenced by their participation in STM as adolescents. Given the high cost of STM, little study has been done to measure its impact on church leadership. Is adolescent STM participation a significant factor in the development of future church leaders? If so, how specifically have they been impacted? This transformational role on future church leaders would be worth noting and developing further. Which elements have been helpful to the development of church leaders? Which have been harmful to the sending church and church leaders? Does STM contribute to church leaders' positive role in the community?

As previously mentioned, arguments around STM focus on the paternalistic and prejudicial attitudes perpetuated in participants and the dependency they can create in their hosts.[7] Missiologists confirm that more research needs to be done to connect STM

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[5] K Beyerlein, J Trinitapoli, and G Adler, "The Effect of Religious Short-Term Mission Trips on Youth Civic Engagement," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 50, no. 4 (2011): 792.

[6] Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert, *Helping without Hurting in Short-Term Missions: Participant's Guide* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2014).

[7] B Hunter Farrell, "Re-Membering Missiology: An Invitation to an Activist Agenda," *Missiology* 46, no. 1 (2018): 37–49, https://doi.org/10.1177/0091829617748940; Corbett and Fikkert, *Helping without Hurting in Short-Term Missions*, 36–38.

data with practice.[8] How could STM combat paternalism rather than perpetuate it? Could STM foster leadership that would be culturally astute and worldly-wise?

Short-Term Missions

Recent research points to a number of ways that STM can prevent paternalism and advance cultural sensitivity in participants. Brian Howell, an anthropology professor at Wheaton College who has studied STM extensively, argues that local leadership and local control of STM are necessary to prevent paternalistic outcomes for hosts and participants.[9] Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert, economic professors at Covenant College who founded The Chalmers Center for community development, point to the need to focus STM around "a long-term process of learning and engagement" to prevent paternalistic outcomes for hosts and participants.[10]

Does STM participation foster "a long-term process of learning and engagement" for adolescents, the church's future leaders? One way to measure the impact of STM on adolescents is to see their activity as adults. LiErin Probasco's study of the National Youth Survey has found that adolescent USA evangelicals participating in domestic STM are significantly more likely to volunteer as adults in local and overseas organizations.[11]

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[8] Farrell, "Re-Membering Missiology"; Robert J. Priest and Joseph Paul Priest, "'They See Everything, and Understand Nothing': Short-Term Mission and Service Learning," *Missiology* 36, no. 1 (January 1, 2008): 53–73, https://doi.org/10.1177/009182960803600105.

[9] Howell, *Short-Term Mission*.

[10] Corbett and Fikkert, *Helping without Hurting in Short-Term Missions*. Page 9.

[11] LiErin Probasco, "Giving Time, Not Money: Long-Term Impacts of Short-Term Mission Trips," *Missiology* 41, no. 2 (April 2013): 202–24, https://doi.org/10.1177/0091829612475166.

Many youth pastors and adolescent participants explain that STM is transformational[12] because it facilitates a changed worldview leading to changed behavior,[13] often through service learning and STM's interaction with global learning outcomes.

Short-Term Missions as Service Learning

Educators have identified service learning as a best practice for long-term transformational development in adolescents.[14] Service learning combines hands-on community service with intentional instruction around that service. Often it is paired with an educational institution or NGO to facilitate reflection on their service. Service learning, such as painting a widow's home or tutoring children, is now incorporated into many STM trips.[15] The interaction between participants and those they are serving is often cross-cultural and furthers community engagement, contextual awareness, and broadened perspectives.[16] Service learning on STM can also prevent ethnocentrism and encourage cultural sensitivity.[17]

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[12] Howell, *Short-Term Mission*, 19–21.

[13] Dominique Burrows, Stephen Snyder, and Andrew Ferro, "Perceived Longitudinal Effects of SLMTs," *Journal of Psychology & Theology* 46, no. 3 (2018): 176, https://doi.org/10.1177/0091647118794242.

[14] Caitlin Coyer et al., "Cultivating Global Learning Locally through Community-Based Experiential Education," *Journal of Experiential Education* 42, no. 2 (June 1, 2019): 155–70.

[15] Burrows, Snyder, and Ferro, "Perceived Longitudinal Effects of SLMTs"; B Hunter Farrell, "From Short-Term Mission to Global Discipleship: A Peruvian Case Study," *Missiology* 41, no. 2 (April 2013): 163, https://doi.org/10.1177/0091829612475161; Beyerlein, Trinitapoli, and Adler, "The Effect of Religious Short-Term Mission Trips on Youth Civic Engagement," 780.

[16] Coyer et al., "Cultivating Global Learning Locally through Community-Based Experiential Education," 155,168.

[17] Priest and Priest, "'They See Everything, and Understand Nothing,'" 70; Burrows, Snyder, and Ferro, "Perceived Longitudinal Effects of SLMTs.".

Short-Term Missions and Global Learning Objectives

How do we know if a particular STM is encouraging cultural sensitivity? Educators and major USA universities have developed criteria called global learning outcomes (GLO) to evaluate if an educational opportunity is fostering cultural sensitivity in students.[18] They also evaluate if a student is being culturally sensitive rather than being ethnocentric.[19] Therefore, STM could be designed and evaluated with GLO criteria to develop STM participants who engage their community with cultural sensitivity.

Transformational Learning

When is STM for adolescents transformational for a lifetime rather than simply adventurous as a short-term experience? To answer this question, researchers employ transformational learning theory. Transformation learning theory was pioneered by Jack Mezirow to describe how people change their worldview.[20] Mezirow formulated a ten-part outline for the transformational learning process. It begins with a disorienting dilemma that eventually leads individuals to change their worldview after a period of

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[18] Kevin Hovland, "Global Learning: Defining, Designing, Demonstrating," Text, Association of American Colleges & Universities, January 18, 2014, https://www.aacu.org/globallearning.

[19] Richard M. Battistoni, Nicholas V. Longo, and Stephanie Raill Jayanandhan, "Acting Locally in a Flat World: Global Citizenship and the Democratic Practice of Service-Learning," *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement* 13, no. 2 (January 1, 2009): 89–108.

[20] Lisa M. Baumgartner, "Mezirow's Theory of Transformative Learning from 1975 to Present," in *The Handbook of Transformative Learning: Theory, Research, and Practice*, ed. Edward W. Taylor and Patricia Cranton, 1st ed, Jossey-Bass Higher and Adult Education Series (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2012), 99.

exploration and trial of new roles.[21] If STM is transformational for adolescent

participants, then those participants should show long-term worldview changes.

Transformational Learning in Adolescents

What does transformational change look like for adolescents? Generally,

adolescents are able to change to a degree that correlates to their psychological well-

being; the healthier an adolescent is psychologically the more deeply they are able to

change and learn.[22] Katie Larson found significant evidence of transformational change

in a four-year qualitative study of two adolescents.[23] These adolescents experienced

transformational learning through incidents that "clearly changed the young women's

identity, self-awareness, worldview, perspectives, thinking, or actions."[24] Larson found

that they experienced transformation in the same way as adults, except in the area of the

adolescents' body awareness.[25]

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[21] Jack Mezirow, "Learning to Think Like an Adult: Core Concepts of Transformation Theory," in *The Handbook of Transformative Learning: Theory, Research, and Practice*, ed. Edward W. Taylor and Patricia Cranton, 1st ed, Jossey-Bass Higher and Adult Education Series (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2012), 86.

[22] Royette Tavernier and Teena Willoughby, "Adolescent Turning Points: The Association between Meaning-Making and Psychological Well-Being," *Developmental Psychology; Washington* 48, no. 4 (July 2012): 1058–68, http://dx.doi.org.search.covenantseminary.edu/10.1037/a0026326.

[23] Katie Titus Larson, "Adolescents' Self-Described Transformations and Their Alignments with Transformative Learning Theory" (Antioch University, 2016).

[24] Larson, 181.

[25] Larson, 183.

Transformational Learning in Short-Term Missions and Service Learning

Can transformational learning occur during service learning? Phil Bamber, a

senior lecturer in the education department at Liverpool Hope University, and Les

Hankin, who established the Education Studies Department at Liverpool Hope

University, found that service learning facilitates transformational learning and leads to

GLO outcomes as well.[26] Chris Hackett, a professor at School of Education at The

University of Notre Dame Australia, and Shane Lavery, coordinator of postgraduate

studies at the same institution, found that service learning can help develop "civic,

spiritual, religious and personal formation" in high-school age adolescents.[27] A large

study of 2,408 German adolescents, led by Gabriela Christoph from the German Institute

for International Educational Research, found that community service leads to prosocial

behaviors and thus indicates transformation.[28]

Service learning in STM could also facilitate transformational learning. For

example, mowing a lawn for a widow and then learning the widow's story would lend

insight, as would learning the history of the neighborhood. STM practitioner Bryce Stout

and economics professor Lance Wescher have shown that guided reflection and teaching

help STM participants connect what they are experiencing with their previous experience

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[26] Phil Bamber and Les Hankin, "Transformative Learning through Service-Learning: No Passport Required," *Education & Training; London* 53, no. 2/3 (2011): 190–206, http://dx.doi.org.search.covenantseminary.edu/10.1108/00400911111115726.

[27] Chris Hackett and Shane Lavery, "Student Ministry: Youth 'Step up' to Lead and Serve," *Journal of Catholic School Studies* 83, no. 1 (January 1, 2011): 54, https://researchonline.nd.edu.au/edu_article/80.

[28] Gabriela Christoph, Burkhard Gniewosz, and Heinz Reinders, *How Does Community Service Promote Prosocial Behavior? Examining the Role of Agency and Ideology Experience.*, 2014, 499–500, https://nls.ldls.org.uk/welcome.html?ark:/81055/vdc_100058505743.0x000006.

in transformational ways.[29] Probasco highlighted adolescents who participate on an STM within the United States and showed that they are significantly more likely to participate in local and international volunteer opportunities than adults who did not participate in a domestic STM as an adolescent.[30] Beyond volunteering, STM also fosters participants donating to causes and participating politically, according to a study of the National Survey of Youth Religion led by Kraig Beyerlein, of the sociology department at the University of Notre Dame.[31]

Researchers have thus found that STM can be a vehicle for transformational learning for adolescents, facilitating culturally sensitive worldviews and an increase in volunteering in adulthood. What is not known is the impact of domestic STM on future church leaders. Does adolescent STM participation impact future church leaders in how they lead ministries and congregations in their communities? Can adolescent STM participation facilitate developing future church leaders who are leading their churches to engage in their community?

Purpose Statement

The National Survey of Youth and Religion's longitudinal, randomized interview of 3,370 youth aged 13-17 found 28 percent of youth have gone on a STM.[32] Given this

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[29] Bryce Stout and Lance Wescher, "An Empirical Assessment of the Effects of Cohort Training and Follow-Up on the Outcomes of Short-Term Missions," *Journal of Sociology and Christianity* 7, no. 1 (April 25, 2017): 34, https://sociologyandchristianity.org/index.php/jsc/article/view/101.

[30] Probasco, "Giving Time, Not Money," 202.

[31] Beyerlein, Trinitapoli, and Adler, "The Effect of Religious Short-Term Mission Trips on Youth Civic Engagement," 792.

[32] Trinitapoli and Vaisey, "The Transformative Role of Religious Experience," 128.

statistic, church leaders are asking what the long-term implications of STM are. Does the costly investment in STM bear long-term results? Does STM aid church leadership development? Can STM combat paternalistic behavior in church leaders? Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine how church leaders who participated in a domestic STM during high school engage local community needs years later.

Research Questions

The following questions guided the qualitative research:

1. How do church leaders describe the impact their high school STM had in their choice to be a church leader?
2. How do church leaders describe the transformational elements of their high school STM experience?
3. How do church leaders describe their engagement with local community needs immediately after the STM experience?
4. How do church leaders engage local community needs now?

Definition of Terms

Participant – For the sake of this study, the term "participant" will mean a person who travels to a new place on STM, not someone who hosts and receives them.

Short-Term Mission (STM) – STM is a trip of one week to three months where a church group commonly provides physical aid, interacts cross-culturally, and participates in evangelism.[33]

Service Learning (SL) – SL is the practice of facilitating student learning through participation in community service where students are guided in intentional reflection about their experience and its context.[34]

Transformational Learning (TL) – TL is a learning theory that describes how people significantly change their worldview leading to changed behavior.[35]

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[33] Beyerlein, Trinitapoli, and Adler, "The Effect of Religious Short-Term Mission Trips on Youth Civic Engagement," 781.

[34] Robert G. Bringle, "Hybrid High-Impact Pedagogies: Integrating Service-Learning with Three Other High-Impact Pedagogies," *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning* 24, no. 1 (Fall 2017): 49, http://dx.doi.org/10.3998/mjcsloa.3239521.0024.105; Bamber and Hankin, "Transformative Learning through Service-Learning," 192; Burrows, Snyder, and Ferro, "Perceived Longitudinal Effects of SLMTs," 169–70.

[35] Baumgartner, "Mezirow's Theory of Transformative Learning from 1975 to Present," 99.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

The purpose of this study was to examine how church leaders who participated in a domestic STM during high school were transformed in that experience and how they engage local community needs years later. This literature review begins with STM in the Old Testament. Nehemiah 3 and 5 are examined to understand STM from a biblical perspective. What did STM look like in the Old Testament? Who participated? What value, if any, was associated with STM? Was there a tangible impact on STM on participants individually and as a community? How did STM impact Israelite leaders?

Secondly, the literature review looks at STM as a literature topic in recent research, specifically, adolescent STM experience in light of service learning and global learning objectives. To what extent can STM mimic the service learning model? To what degree does STM facilitate global learning objectives for adolescents?

Thirdly, the literature review surveys transformational learning. The study explores the impact of high school STM experience on current adult church leaders. Is STM transformational for adolescent participants, leading to lasting deep change and learning? If so, how? What makes high school STM transformational for participants?

Short-Term Missions in Nehemiah 3 and 5

This section will focus on two chapters from the Old Testament book of Nehemiah where there is evidence of STM and its impact. In Nehemiah 3, visiting groups from surrounding towns help rebuild Jerusalem. In Nehemiah 5 the author records how STM participants' worldview was changed so that they participated in structural reform.

Nehemiah 3 offers a biblical example of STM. What did these STM participants do? Who were they, and where did they come from? Nehemiah's memoir comes from the reign of Persian king Artaxerxes,[36] and this chapter records those who rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem.[37] They were STM participants from other towns working alongside the people of Jerusalem, and they completed their mission in fifty-two days.[38]

Participants in Nehemiah 3

Nehemiah 3 records citizens of Jerusalem and groups who came from towns surrounding Jerusalem to help rebuild the walls. These groups came from at least nine neighboring towns and districts. The closest group was from Beth Hakkerem about four kilometers away. The farthest groups were from Jericho and Keilah about thirty-five kilometers away, a full day's journey by foot. Most of these groups would therefore have had to stay overnight in Jerusalem, as it would not have been possible to travel both ways by foot and work in Jerusalem. The chart below gives an overview of the distance, direction, and walking time from Jerusalem to these towns.

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[36] H. G. M. Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, Word Biblical Commentary, v. 16 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1985), 166; David J. A. Clines, *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther: Based on the Revised Standard Version*, New Century Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: 1984), 136.

[37] Oded Lipschits, "Nehemiah 3: Sources, Composition, and Purpose," in *New Perspectives on Ezra-Nehemiah: History and Historiography, Text, Literature, and Interpretation*, ed. Isaac Kalimi (Winina Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2012), 73 (EBSCOHost).

[38] Nehemiah 6:15

Table 1. List of STM Groups in Nehemiah 3

Town (chapter/verse)	Distance to Jerusalem (Direction from Jerusalem)	Walking Time
Jericho (3:2)	35 km (northeast)	7 ½ hours
Tekoa (3:5,27)	18 km (south)	4 hours
Gibeon (3:7)	15 km (north)	3 ½ hours
Mizpah[39] (3:7,15)	16 km (north)	3 ½ hours
Zanoah (3:13)	30 km (west)	6 ½ hours
Beth Hakkerem (3:14)	4 km (west)	1 hour
Beth Zur (3:16)	32 km (southwest)	7 hours
Keilah[40] (3:17,18)	37 km (southwest)	8 hours
Mizpah (3:19)	16 km (north)	3 ½ hours

Work in Nehemiah 3

Nehemiah records that the people were active in working on the wall and repairing its gates. One pericope of chapter three describes the work of Shallum, son of Col-hozeh, ruler of the district of Mizpah. This ruler would likely have come with a team traveling sixteen kilometers to get to Jerusalem. Nehemiah writes that Shallum rebuilt the Fountain Gate, "roofing it over and putting its doors and bolts and bars in place."[41] In

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[39] Blenkinsopp argues that Mizpah is Tell en-Nasbeh. Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah: A Commentary*, 1st ed, The Old Testament Library (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1988), 234–35.

[40] Clines, *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*, 155.

[41] Neh. 3:15.

addition to working on the Fountain Gate, Shallum "repaired the wall of the Pool of Siloam, by the King's Garden, as far as the steps going down form the City of David."[42]

Bible scholars disagree about the type of work done by participants from surrounding towns and districts. Perhaps some of the groups worked physically while others helped only financially. Oded Lipschits, professor in the Department of Archaeology and Ancient Near East Studies at Tel-Aviv University, argues that while normally the verb הֶחֱזִיק from the root חזק would be translated "repaired," "rebuilt," or "reinforced," it should be translated "financed" in Nehemiah 3.[43] Lipschits concedes that a few of the groups actually came and worked on the wall: groups from Tekoa, Beth Hekkerem, and Mizpah.[44] Lipschits' argument is based on his evaluation that most of Nehemiah 3 is a late addition to the text and that there was a two-step process of differentiating between "organizing and financing" and completing the physical work on the gates and doors.[45] Many scholars disagree with Lipschits' evaluation. The text itself indicates that these out-of-town groups physically participated in the work. Blenkinsopp refers to them as "work gangs from certain localities."[46] Keil and Delitzsch refer to them as "building parties."[47] Rather than differentiating the type of work, financial versus

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[42] Neh. 3:15.

[43] Lipschits, "Nehemiah 3: Sources, Composition, and Purpose," 83,86.

[44] Lipschits, 80, 88.

[45] Lipschits, 82.

[46] Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, 231.

[47] C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament: The Books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther*, trans. Sophia Taylor, Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdmans, 1950), 175.

physical work, many scholars state that the text primarily differentiates between the

various locations of the physical work.[48]

Location of Work in Nehemiah 3

The author of Nehemiah 3 stresses that the work groups building the wall worked

"next to" each other. The phrase וְעַל־יָדָם, meaning "next to," is used eleven times in the

first twelve verses.[49] The work groups are side-by-side. The phrase אַחֲרָיו, meaning "next

to" or "after" is used sixteen times in the last seventeen verses.[50] The copious use of these

modifiers highlights proximity, and thus, the visiting groups and Jerusalem citizens are

physically working next to each other. Work groups in Nehemiah 3:1-15 are located on

the north and west side of Jerusalem, and work groups in Nehemiah 3:16-32 are on the

south and east side of Jerusalem.[51]

What about groups that are not working? The author points out the nobles of

Tekoa as an exception to those working on the wall. While the men of Tekoa work on the

wall, "their nobles would not put their shoulders to the work."[52] This exception proves

the rule: people of various economic strata are joined in the work of rebuilding the wall.

The resulting work was transformational for those who participated.

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[48] Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 188–89; 201–2; Keil and Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament: The Books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther*, 173–75; Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, 231–32; Clines, *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*, 149–50.

[49] Neh. 3:1-12.

[50] Neh. 3:15-32.

[51] Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, 231; Clines, *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*, 149–50.

[52] Neh. 3:5.

What impact did the rebuilding of the walls have on the hearts and lives of those who participated? Scholars argue that the impact of the work went beyond the walls to the worldview of the participants and to the structure of their society.

Worldview Transformation in Nehemiah 5:1-13

In biblical literature and Ancient Near East writings, city walls and the temples they surrounded were largely inseparable and often used metaphorically to represent the dwelling of deity.[53] Manfred Oeming, chair of Old Testament Studies at University of Heidelberg, argues that the rebuilt walls were a statement to the surrounding people of the Jewish worldview; Jerusalem was the dwelling place of God.[54]

If wall building was primarily a statement of the Jewish worldview, were the wall builders transformed by that worldview? How would we know if they had significant change in their values, beliefs, and behaviors as a result of the work? Nehemiah 5 offers an example of transformation; the people change their actions from injustice towards the poor to actions of justice towards the poor. This transformation conforms to the worldview expressed in the Torah. Joshua Berman, professor at Bar-Ilan University, argues that Nehemiah applies Exodus 22:24-26 laws on debt legislation and Leviticus 25

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[53] Manfred Oeming, "The Real History: The Theological Ideas behind Nehemiah's Wall," in *New Perspectives on Ezra-Nehemiah: History and Historiography, Text, Literature, and Interpretation*, ed. Isaac Kalimi (Winina Lake, Ind: Eisenbrauns, 2012), 147–48, EBook Collection (EBSCOHost).

[54] Oeming, 140.

laws for freeing slaves and transforms them into a new application.[55] All interest

payments should stop, and fields, vineyards, olive groves, and houses and the interest are

to be returned immediately to those who lost these in bankruptcy.[56] These practical

changes in financial practice indicate worldview change.

The worldview change is ratified publicly. Nehemiah summons "the priests and

made the nobles and officials take an oath to do as they had promised."[57] Nehemiah has

them publicly proclaim they would follow this debt relief and interest payback.[58]

Following this public promise, Nehemiah reports, "The people did as they had

promised;" they changed their behavior towards the poor.[59]

Structural Transformation in Nehemiah 5:14-18

How might STM lead participants to advocate for structural change in society? In

Nehemiah 5, Nehemiah changes the governmental structure from an oppressive one to

one that supported the public good.

Oded Lipschits argues that Nehemiah transformed the role of the governor, פֶּחָם,

from oppressor to public servant. Lipschits states, "Nehemiah used the silver not to

enlarge his estate but to support public works."[60] Nehemiah records that previous

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[55] Joshua A Berman, "The Legal Blend in Biblical Narrative (Joshua 20:1-9, Judges 6:25-31, 1 Samuel 15:2, 28:3-25, 2 Kings 4:1-7, Jeremiah 34:12-17, Nehemiah 5:1-12)," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 134, no. 1 (2015): 105, https://doi.org/10.15699/jbl.1341.2015.2676.

[56] Nehemiah 5:6-11.

[57] Neh. 5:12.

[58] Nehemiah 5:12-13a.

[59] Nehemiah 5:13b.

[60] Lipschits, "Nehemiah 3: Sources, Composition, and Purpose," 88.

governors "placed a heavy burden on the people and took forty shekels of silver from them in addition to food and wine."[61] Lisbeth Fried, visiting scholar of Near Eastern Studies at the University of Michigan, states that Nehemiah changed the structural dynamic. Rather than using food as a tool of oppression, food at the governor's table is now a form of redistributive wealth.[62] Nehemiah 5 is an example of how God's people were transformed by seeing God again reigning in his walled city, leading to structural change. Oeming argues that rebuilding the wall is inseparable from transformation: "Erecting the wall is part of spiritual renewal."[63] This spiritual renewal was exactly what Nehemiah had originally prayed for in Nehemiah 1:5-11, before the wall building.[64]

Summary of Short-Term Mission in Nehemiah 3 and 5

In Nehemiah 3 groups of Israelites come from towns surrounding Jerusalem to join in the work of rebuilding the city walls with the local people. In Nehemiah 5, evidence of transformational learning as a result of the experience becomes clear. Changed individuals and a changed people institute structural change for justice in the community.

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[61] Nehemiah 5:15.

[62] Lisbeth S Fried, "150 Men at Nehemiah's Table?: The Role of the Governor's Meals in the Achaemenid Provincial Economy," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 137, no. 4 (2018): 827–28, https://doi.org/10.15699/jbl.1374.2018.200652.

[63] Oeming, "The Real History: The Theological Ideas behind Nehemiah's Wall," 143.

[64] Oeming, 141, 143.

Learning in Adolescent Short-Term Missions

STM is one of the foundational elements of the adolescent experience in the church in the USA. Robert Priest, director of the doctoral program of intercultural studies at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, and Joseph Priest, a missiologist, state, "Short-term missions today is a core part of youth ministry." [65] STM utilizes service learning as a primary vehicle to educate adolescents in how to interact in community. Global learning objectives (GLO) have been designed to prevent paternalism and to facilitate empowering and enhancing cultural sensitivity. How are adolescents experiencing STM? In what ways might service learning be a good vehicle for STM experience? To what degree does STM experience benefit GLO outcomes or facilitate paternalism? These are all questions scholars of STM are studying today. This part of the literature review focuses around adolescent participation in STM, STM as service learning, and STM for global learning objectives.

Adolescent Participation in STM

In this section the adolescent STM participation is analyzed from recent research, specifically, the degree, location, timing, and ingredients of adolescent STM. All of these areas are significant in order to understand how adolescents participate in STM.

Number of Participants

Adolescents are attending STM trips in great numbers. From a national, random study of over 3,370 youth, those attending church and those who are not, 28 percent had

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[65] Priest and Priest, "'They See Everything, and Understand Nothing,'" 61.

gone on a STM.[66] Of these youth, Latter Day Saint adolescents lead the way with 77 percent, and those who do not identify as religious are least likely to participate, at 13 percent. Conservative Protestant adolescents fall in the middle of these groups, at 50 percent. Extrapolating from the 28 percent who participate in STM, roughly five million, out of eighteen million, have participated in STM. Scholars on a collegiate and graduate level have seen the impact of STM participation. Robert Priest and Joseph Priest studied master of divinity students and found 51 percent had participated in an overseas STM during or before their studies.[67] Many collegiate professors remark that STM experience is common among students coming into their colleges.[68]

Probasco has found that adolescent participation in STM is a historic and growing phenomenon. Probasco utilized the 2005 Religion and Global Issues Survey, a nation-wide survey of over 2,200 active church members,18 or older, produced by Princeton University sociologist Robert Wuthnow. The survey included questions about STM participation. Probasco estimates that for "at least the past 50 years, more than 10% of active Christian youth have participated in some form of religious outreach they describe as a 'short-term mission trip.'"[69] Over time, the number of adolescents who participate in STM has continued to grow. The chart below is taken from Probasco's study of the 2005 Religion and Global Issues Survey.

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[66] Trinitapoli and Vaisey, "The Transformative Role of Religious Experience," 128.

[67] Priest and Priest, "'They See Everything, and Understand Nothing,'" 54.

[68] Allyn Decker and Greg Hawkins, "Global Learning and Development as an Engagement Strategy for Christian Higher Education: A Macro Study," *Christian Higher Education* 15, no. 5 (January 1, 2016): 267; Howell, *Short-Term Mission*, 19.

[69] Probasco, "Giving Time, Not Money," 212.

Table 2. Generational Participation Rates in STM as an Adolescent[70]

Age Group	Percent Who Participated as an Adolescent
18-29	26.4
30-39	17.8
40-49	12.4
50-59	11.5

Types of Participation

Scholars generally divide adolescent participation in STM into two areas: evangelism and work projects.[71] Evangelism focuses on sharing Bible stories with children via crafts, skits, and games. Work projects such as painting and repair work address low-income individuals and families, mission agency compounds, or church ministry facilities. STM trips are often one to two weeks and cost around $1,000.[72]

There is a significant debate in the validity of adolescent participation in STM. This debate started in the 1970s when adolescents first began participating in STM. The debate focused on two areas: the duration of STM and the maturity of STM participants.

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[70] Probasco, 213.

[71] Howell, *Short-Term Mission*, 24; Stout and Wescher, "An Empirical Assessment of the Effects of Cohort Training and Follow-Up on the Outcomes of Short-Term Missions," 23; Trinitapoli and Vaisey, "The Transformative Role of Religious Experience," 132; Probasco, "Giving Time, Not Money," 204; Beyerlein, Trinitapoli, and Adler, "The Effect of Religious Short-Term Mission Trips on Youth Civic Engagement," 781.

[72] Priest and Priest, "'They See Everything, and Understand Nothing,'" 57.

Debate over the Duration of STM

Initial debate around STM participants of any age, adolescent or adult, centered on the duration of short-term mission. Early STM were not one or two-week trips: they were three months to two years. Even at two years, many missiologists in the 1970s considered them inconsequential for the STM participants and those in the host communities because of their short duration.[73] The length of time for viable STM decreased every decade because long-distance air travel became more economical. Howell argues, "Technologically and economically, the growth of STM practice was made practical by the development of mass air travel."[74] STM continued to grow in spite of the argument against its impact.

Unlike the 1970s, where the focus was on impact, debate in the 1980s and 1990s focused on cultural sensitivity and training; STM was not viable because it was not culturally sensitive. Robert Priest reflects that in the 1990s, he argued, "Cultural and linguistic understandings…[were] needed, therefore, to be long-term and underpinned by extensive missiological training."[75]

By the 1990s, the last battle over STM as mission was unfolding.[76] In 1992, *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* hosted two presenters on opposite sides of STM. A former long-term missionary, Seth Barnes, had formed a mission agency focused entirely on STM. He argued that the future of missions and the church depended on STM because

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[73] Howell, *Short-Term Mission*, 96.

[74] Howell, 74.

[75] Priest and Priest, "'They See Everything, and Understand Nothing,'" 53.

[76] Howell, *Short-Term Mission*, 113.

it utilized, organized, and promoted missionary activity.[77] His opponent, Leslie Pelt, argued that STM was no substitute for long-term missionaries.[78] By 2000, the debate over STM's validity and role had ended, and the leading missiological journal, *Evangelical Missions Quarterly,* put STM on its cover.[79]

Debate over Adolescent STM Maturity

Besides the length of commitment, another debate around STM centered on the age of participants. Groups like Teen Missions International started recruiting teens for STM in 1970. These groups argued that teenage participants were more likely to go to Bible college and become missionaries or church workers if they participated in STM.[80]

Part of the argument over maturity is connected to cost. Is it worth spending large sums of money to send teenagers for what might be considered a summer vacation? Developmental economists Corbett and Fikkert argue that sending large numbers of teens can do more harm than good.[81] The counter argument comes from youth pastors and scholars who say the investment in youth is the future of the church.[82]

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[77] Seth Barnes, "The Changing Face of the Missionary Force," *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 28, no. 4 (October 1992): 376–81.

[78] Leslie Pelt, "What's behind the Wave of Short-Termers," *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 28, no. 4 (October 1992): 384–88.

[79] Brian Howell has a comprehensive review of this history. Howell, *Short-Term Mission*, 115; Gary R Corwin, "The Message of Short-Term Missions," *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 36, no. 4 (October 2000): 422–23.

[80] Howell, *Short-Term Mission*, 98.

[81] Corbett and Fikkert, *Helping without Hurting in Short-Term Missions*; Priest and Howell, "Introduction," 125.

[82] Howell, *Short-Term Mission*, 109.

Timing and Locations

A majority of adolescents take STM trips to domestic locations with local churches. Probasco has found that roughly two thirds of adolescent STM participants go on domestic trips in the USA and one third go on international trips.[83] Most of these trips are bound up with youth ministries in specific churches. Priest and Priest argue, "Short-term missions today is a core part of youth ministry," and "STM is a core part of the internal discipleship ministry of local churches."[84] Anthropologist Brian Howell interviewed youth pastors and mission pastors at the forefront of developing adolescent STM trips in the 1980s. One of the pastors Howell interviewed remarked, "The trips…become your best tool for discipleship at the church."[85]

Because of school attendance, adolescents attend STM trips primarily during the summer or spring break. STM leaders argue that this is a redemptive use of that time.[86]

Outcomes

Adolescents who participate in mission trips experience several expected and unexpected outcomes. In a national study of over 2,500 adolescents, Trinitapoli and Vaisey found participants are more likely to increase their church attendance, Bible

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[83] Probasco, "Giving Time, Not Money," 213.

[84] Priest and Priest, "'They See Everything, and Understand Nothing,'" 61.

[85] Howell, *Short-Term Mission*, 109.

[86] Howell, 123–25.

reading, prayer, and propensity to share their faith.[87] Counterintuitively, adolescents who go on STM are just as likely to have doubt in God as those who do not.[88]

Another significant outcome of STM participation for adolescents is civic engagement. Sociologists Kraig Beyerlain from University of Notre Dame, Jenny Trinitapoli from Penn State University, and Gary Adler from University of Arizona analyzed the National Survey of Youth and Religion and found that adolescents participating in STM were significantly more involved civically. Specifically, students participated more in religious-based, community volunteer work. [89]

Researchers debate the effect of STM on participants' financial giving. Ver Beek studied STM participation and found that while STM participants self-reported increased giving, there was no change in financial giving towards the mission agency that had hosted the trip.[90] On the other hand, Probasco found that certain STM participant groups have increased giving.[91] However, like Van Beek, Probasco found that "participation in a domestic or international mission trip is *not* a significant predictor of differences in giving to one's local congregation."[92]

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[87] Trinitapoli and Vaisey, "The Transformative Role of Religious Experience," 138.

[88] Trinitapoli and Vaisey, 138.

[89] Beyerlein, Trinitapoli, and Adler, "The Effect of Religious Short-Term Mission Trips on Youth Civic Engagement," 780.

[90] Beek, "The Impact of Short-Term Missions," 489–91.

[91] Probasco, "Giving Time, Not Money," 213.

[92] Probasco, 216.

STM as Service Learning

STM and service learning (SL) are close cousins. Both SL and STM have a community service aspect. SL best practices include a reflection component for students to process their community service. Some STM trips include this reflective component, and others do not. SL literature offers several beneficial applications to STM.

Definition

SL is the practice of facilitating student learning through participation in community service, where students are guided in intentional reflection about their experience and its context.[93] SL students are members of a particular educational institution like a high school or college. Students participate in service-oriented activities in their local community such as tutoring children, assisting a food pantry, or serving in a community development organization. SL students are guided in processing their experience by someone in their educational institution.

Benefits

Research has found that SL can contribute to worldview transformation. Anthropologist Paul Hiebert explains that worldview is "the foundational cognitive, affective and evaluative assumptions and frameworks a group of people makes about the nature of reality which they use to order their lives."[94] Phil Bamber, senior lecturer of

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[93] Bringle, "Hybrid High-Impact Pedagogies," 49; Bamber and Hankin, "Transformative Learning through Service-Learning," 192; Burrows, Snyder, and Ferro, "Perceived Longitudinal Effects of SLMTs," 169–70.

[94] Paul G. Hiebert, *Transforming Worldviews: An Anthropological Understanding of How People Change* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Academic, 2008), 25–26.

education and leader of International Service-Learning at Liverpool Hope University, and Les Hankin, founder of the British Education Studies Association, observed worldview transformation in some SL participants. Stereotypes and preconceived ideas were broken down by the students' SL experiences. [95]

Another beneficial outcome of worldview transformation from SL participation is increased intercultural competency. Intercultural competency is the "ability to communicate and interact appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills and attitude."[96] Burrows, Snyder, and Ferro's longitudinal study of over 100 participants who completed SL in the context of a STM had "significantly higher perceived intercultural competency."[97] Burrows et al attribute much of this intercultural competency gain to "preparation, reflection, and debriefing" of participants.[98] Participants experience cultural differences and analyze those differences using their pre-service preparation, guided processing during the service work, and then post-service reflection and communication.

Another positive outcome from worldview transformation from SL participation is increased interpersonal skills, also called prosocial behavior. Gabriela Christoph, professor at the German Institute for International Educational Research, Burkhard Gniewosz, professor at the University of Munich, and Heinz Reiders, professor at the University of Wuerzberg, surveyed 2,400 adolescents and found community service, a

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[95] Bamber and Hankin, "Transformative Learning through Service-Learning," 190.

[96] Burrows, Snyder, and Ferro, "Perceived Longitudinal Effects of SLMTs," 169.

[97] Burrows, Snyder, and Ferro, 168.

[98] Burrows, Snyder, and Ferro, 170.

primary component of SL, promotes prosocial behavior.[99] While Christoph et al studied the immediate impact of prosocial behavior on those they surveyed, Burrows et al found the same positive outcome of increased interpersonal skills in their longitudinal study of those who participated in a SL and a control group that did not.[100]

Finally, SL has been found to positively impact adolescent leadership skills. Chris Hackett and Shane Lavery, both education professors at The University of Notre Dame Australia, undertook a qualitative study of adolescent participation in SL and its relationship to student leadership and found it developed their leadership skills.[101] Specifically, Hackett and Lavery observed students who developed skills in influencing and serving others.

Processing STM with SL

Several scholars argue that SL practices should be wedded to STM. SL heightens STM experience by providing experiential learning and, then helping participants to process that experience. Using a longitudinal study of over 100 STM participants whose STM trips included SL best practices including preparation, reflection and debriefing, Dominique Burrows, Stephen Snyder, and Andrew Ferro explain that the SL practice of serving with an intentional focus on learning heightens STM experience and positive

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[99] Christoph, Gniewosz, and Reinders, *How Does Community Service Promote Prosocial Behavior?*, 37.

[100] Burrows, Snyder, and Ferro, "Perceived Longitudinal Effects of SLMTs," 173–75.

[101] Hackett and Lavery, "Student Ministry," 2.

outcomes.[102] Burrows, Snyder, and Ferro use the term short-term service learning

missions trips (SLMT) to argue that SL practices should be wedded to STM.[103]

Burrows, Snyder, and Ferro are not alone in advocating for the guided learning

elements of SL practices in STM. Robert Priest and Joseph Priest studied over 5,000

participants in STM. Priest and Priest argue that combining STM experience with SL

cultural analysis and reflection can reduce participants ethnocentrism.[104] On the other

side, Priest and Priest argue that without the guided learning component of SL, "It is

possible to carry out a short-term mission trip in a way that contributes to the

ethnocentrism of those who travel, making them more prejudiced about those whom they

have encountered."[105] Priest and Priest explain that without the guided learning, STM

participants come to their own conclusions without learning how their own history,

culture, language, politics, and various factors impact their experience.

STM and Global Learning Objectives

There is a way to know if STM is increasing participants' cultural sensitivity and

decreasing ethnocentrism. STM experience can facilitate global learning objectives

(GLO) for those who participate. GLO are a group of criteria that educators developed to

evaluate if an educational opportunity is decreasing ethnocentrism and fostering cultural

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[102] Burrows, Snyder, and Ferro, "Perceived Longitudinal Effects of SLMTs," 169–70.

[103] Burrows, Snyder, and Ferro, 168.

[104] Priest and Priest, "'They See Everything, and Understand Nothing,'" 70.

[105] Priest and Priest, 70.

sensitivity or not. [106] Because GLO can evaluate if an educational opportunity is fostering cultural sensitivity, they are important criteria for evaluating STM.

GLOs

GLOs are a group of criteria that evaluate if an educational opportunity is fostering cultural sensitivity. [107] Increasing cultural sensitivity lessens a student's tendency to being ethnocentric. [108] GLOs are associated with global citizenship, [109] global competence, [110] and global learning. The increasing role of GLO is seen in the development of journals such as the International Journal of Development Education and Global Learning. GLOs include six criteria: global self-awareness, perspective taking, cultural diversity, personal and social responsibility, understanding global systems, and applying knowledge to contemporary global contexts. [111]

Global self-awareness refers to a student's ability to understand their place in the globe. Perspective taking refers to the ability of a student to "alter their frames of reference when faced with conflicting information." [112] Cultural diversity refers to a

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[106] Hovland, "Global Learning."

[107] Hovland.

[108] Battistoni, Longo, and Jayanandhan, "Acting Locally in a Flat World."

[109] Marije Van Gent et al., "The Development of the Global Citizenship Inventory for Adolescents," *International Journal of Development Education and Global Learning* 5, no. 2 (May 20, 2013): 71, https://doi.org/10.18546/IJDEGL.05.2.05.

[110] Coyer et al., "Cultivating Global Learning Locally through Community-Based Experiential Education," 42.

[111] Hovland, "Global Learning," 10.

[112] Coyer et al., "Cultivating Global Learning Locally through Community-Based Experiential Education," 157.

student "utilizing multiple worldviews when communicating with people from other backgrounds to create a solution."[113] Personal and social responsibility indicates a student's awareness that they are responsible not only for their own personal interaction with other individuals but also as a positive influence on society. Understanding global systems and applying knowledge to contemporary global contexts refers to a student's ability to understand systems and apply that understanding in assessing possible problems and solutions related to that system.

For the most part, the literature indicates that GLOs are not being used in evaluating STM's effects on participants. However, missiologists and anthropologists studying STM do use GLO criteria, including perspective taking and understanding global systems, in evaluating STM.[114]

Perspective Taking

Perspective taking evaluates a student's ability to look at a situation from different angles when presented with confusing or conflictual information.[115] Missiologists and STM practitioners argue that STM participants should be able to learn different perspectives and, specifically, different cultures, as they participate in an STM.[116]

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[113] Coyer et al., 157.

[114] Howell, *Short-Term Mission*; Priest and Priest, "'They See Everything, and Understand Nothing'"; Corbett and Fikkert, *Helping without Hurting in Short-Term Missions*.

[115] Coyer et al., "Cultivating Global Learning Locally through Community-Based Experiential Education," 157.

[116] Farrell, "From Short-Term Mission to Global Discipleship"; Farrell, "Re-Membering Missiology"; Terence D. Linhart, "How We Learn from Short-Term Mission Experiences: A Grounded Theory Modification of the Joplin Model," *Christian Education Journal* 7, no. 1 (May 1, 2010): 172–85, https://doi.org/10.1177/073989131000700112; Priest and Priest, "'They See Everything, and Understand

However, Brian Howell, an anthropologist who carried out an ethnographic study of an adolescent STM team, found that STM participants were being led to see the "transcendence of culture as the ultimate goal."[117] Rather than interacting with differences of perspective and differences in cultural practices, STM participants were led in a narrative that cultural differences are something to be overcome rather than understood. Howell shares from his deep study of an STM, "Although the narratives of our journey consistently incorporated the expectations of cultural dislocation and unfamiliarity, the triumph of these trips was seeing how these cultural differences did *not* matter," (original emphasis).[118] Rather than perspective taking as a goal of STM, Howell observed STM working against this goal.

Understanding Global Systems

Understanding global systems is a GLO criteria that evaluates a student's ability to perceive how governmental, educational, economic, and other spheres interact; how each influences individuals; and also how systems interact to together influence individuals. For example, immigration policy interacts with economics, with multiple effects on both the entire society and the economic status of individual immigrants. Priest and Priest argue that STM should facilitate participants' perspective taking skills. If a

Nothing'"; Stout and Wescher, "An Empirical Assessment of the Effects of Cohort Training and Follow-Up on the Outcomes of Short-Term Missions."

[117] Howell, *Short-Term Mission*, 143.

[118] Howell, 143.

STM participant is aided by "an appropriate pedagogical framework," they can grow in their understanding of other people's perspectives.[119]

Brian Howell, an anthropologist who carried out an ethnographic study of an adolescent STM team, found that STM participants were reinforcing a preexisting narrative rather than understanding systemic differences of global systems. Before participating in an STM, Howell observed adolescent participants separated their understanding of culture from their Christian identity. After their STM experience, the adolescent participants took that same dualistic view and reinforced it as they reflected afterwards on their STM experience.[120] Rather than identifying differences in global systems and the impact of those systems, adolescent participants minimized the difference of global systems and the impact of these differences.[121]

Methods for GLOs

Service learning pedagogy has been seen by several scholars to foster GLO in STM. One of the largest studies done on STM by anthropologist Robert Priest and missiologist Joseph Priest came to the conclusion that SL best practices, including guided reflection of participants and perspective taking of different cultural views, was essential to improve STM. STM is "largely a lay movement, and the writings intended to train and orient short-term leaders are missiologically unsophisticated and frequently anti-

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[119] Priest and Priest, "'They See Everything, and Understand Nothing,'" 71.

[120] Howell, *Short-Term Mission*, 141.

[121] Howell, 143.

intellectual."[122] The fear of the researchers is that STM participants may fall into the same trap as tourists, "fleeing from social others at home and exoticizing them abroad."[123] The solution to this ethnocentric trap, the researchers argue, is embedding STM service with intentional learning methods for gaining GLOs, especially guided reflection and perspective taking

Allyn Decker and Greg Hawkins, both scholars in education, also argue that SL best practices of guided reflection and perspective taking are necessary to achieve GLOs. They studied global learning in thirteen Christian colleges and interviewed nineteen of the faculty who led global learning initiatives. Decker and Hawkins explain that while STM exposes students to other cultures, it does not achieve GLOs.[124] The scholars argue that SL models are more effective in achieving GLOs. SL guided reflection and perspective taking promote "cross-cultural dialogue" and require participants to reflect "on the experience in such a way as to gain a deeper understanding of themselves as global citizens and the intercultural issues they encounter."[125]

Guided reflection and perspective taking are promoted in various STM training material. Corbett and Fikkert created a participant's guide for STM, and they observe that guided reflection should be utilized for participants before, during, and after a STM experience.[126] Likewise, "The Standards of Excellence in Short-Term Missions" (SOE)

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[122] Priest and Priest, "'They See Everything, and Understand Nothing,'" 67.

[123] Priest and Priest, 69.

[124] Decker and Hawkins, "Global Learning and Development as an Engagement Strategy for Christian Higher Education," 267–69.

[125] Decker and Hawkins, 269–70.

[126] Corbett and Fikkert, *Helping without Hurting in Short-Term Missions*.

draws from the collaboration of over 400 STM leaders and encourages STM planners to incorporate guided reflection and perspective taking.[127] However, of the seven standards in the SOE, only two focus on guided reflection and perspective taking. The majority of the SOE addresses administration, logistics, programming, and theological focus. Unlike the SOE, Corbett and Fikkert have created a set of questions to guide STM participants through perspective taking in the area of cultural norms[128] and economic strata.[129] Adaptation of GLO-like criteria in STM is irregularly applied.

Summary of Short-Term Missions

STM is a significant component of adolescent church participation. Most adolescent STM participation occurs through local churches going to domestic destinations. The outcomes of adolescent STM participation include sustained or increased religious involvement and increased civic involvement especially around religious-based, community volunteer work. However, missiologists and anthropologists also argue that STM, at times, can increase ethnocentrism of participants.

In evaluating STM outcomes, global learning objectives (GLOs) are helpful to assess participants' cultural competency. GLO can prepare learning experiences and then assess their outcome. Two specific GLOs, perspective taking and understanding global systems, stand out in terms of STM evaluation. First, the STM participants learn to examine different cultural perspectives so that they are not fixated on evaluation through

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[127] Standards of Excellence in Short-Term Missions, "7 Standards of Excellence: A Code of Best Practice for Short-Term Mission Practitioners," 1–2, accessed October 31, 2020, https://soe.org/7-standards/.

[128] Corbett and Fikkert, *Helping without Hurting in Short-Term Missions*, 53–62.

[129] Corbett and Fikkert, 7–39.

their own cultural lenses. Second, STM participants learn to understand global systems at work in the lives of themselves and others.

In comparing STM to service learning (SL), researchers have found SL's pedagogy of intentional, guided reflection and perspective taking would have beneficial outcomes on participants. SL's pedagogy facilitates worldview transformation and intercultural competency among participants. For this reason, many scholars argue that STM should adapt SL best practices to spur worldview transformation and increase cultural competency. This adaptation of SL pedagogy in the area of guided reflection and perspective taking has begun to take shape in STM best practices and training material.

Transformational Learning in Adolescent Short-Term Missions

Transformational learning (TL) theory was developed by Jack Mezirow to describe how people change their worldview.[130] Mezirow developed and refined a ten-part outline of the TL process over the course of thirty years studying how people learn and observing where individuals' worldviews are changed. TL theory now has a fixed place in learning theory studies, the *Journal of Transformative Learning*. The learning process begins with a disorienting dilemma that eventually leads individuals to change their worldview after a period of exploration.[131] A worldview is often described as the lens, or framework, that individuals use to understand everything around them and in the world. Anthropologist Paul Hiebert explains that worldview is "the foundational cognitive, affective, and evaluative assumptions and frameworks a group of people

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[130] Baumgartner, "Mezirow's Theory of Transformative Learning from 1975 to Present," 99.

[131] Mezirow, "Learning to Think Like an Adult: Core Concepts of Transformation Theory," 86.

makes about the nature of reality which they use to order their lives."[132] TL describes the

process of individuals changing their worldview.

Transformational Learning in Adolescents

Adolescence is a time of significant change. After the first few years of life after

birth, adolescence is the second significant time of neurobiological change.[133] What and

how adolescents are able to learn in this period of life has a significant impact on their

future. Researchers have studied TL in adolescents. This section of the study analyzes the

prerequisites for TL for adolescents, what TL looks like for adolescents, and how TL is

observed in adolescent participants of STM and SL.

Adolescent Transformational Learning

Adolescent TL has been established by a wide range of research.[134] Researchers

describe TL in adolescents as a process that begins when an individual experiences a

disorienting event or idea. As the individual wrestles with this disorienting event or idea,

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[132] Hiebert, *Transforming Worldviews*, 25–26.

[133] Ronald E. Dahl et al., "Importance of Investing in Adolescence from a Developmental Science Perspective," *Nature* 554, no. 7693 (February 2018): 441–50, https://doi.org/10.1038/nature25770.

[134] Marc D. Alongi, Benjamin C. Heddy, and Gale M. Sinatra, "Real-World Engagement with Controversial Issues in History and Social Studies: Teaching for Transformative Experiences and Conceptual Change," *Journal of Social Science Education* 15, no. 2 (January 1, 2016): 26–41; Tavernier and Willoughby, "Adolescent Turning Points"; Denise McDonald and Tina Farrell, "Out of the Mouths of Babes: Early College High School Students' Transformational Learning Experiences," *Journal of Advanced Academics* 23, no. 3 (August 1, 2012): 217–48, https://doi.org/10.1177/1932202X12451440; Anthea Zacharatos, Julian Barling, and E. Kevin Kelloway, "Development and Effects of Transformational Leadership in Adolescents," *The Leadership Quarterly* 11, no. 2 (June 1, 2000): 211–26, https://doi.org/10.1016/S1048-9843(00)00041-2; Marie Good and Teena Willoughby, "Adolescence as a Sensitive Period for Spiritual Development," *Child Development Perspectives* 2, no. 1 (2008): 32–37, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1750-8606.2008.00038.x; Jody N. Polleck, "Creating Transformational Spaces: High School Book Clubs with Inner-City Adolescent Females," *The High School Journal* 93, no. 2 (2010): 50–68; Christoph, Gniewosz, and Reinders, *How Does Community Service Promote Prosocial Behavior?*

different perspectives provide insight. The individual tests the new experience or idea

with these different perspectives. After reflection and testing, the individual finds a new

lens or worldview with which to engage the world.

Larson found significant evidence of transformational change in a four-year

qualitative study of two adolescents.[135] She found that they experienced transformation in

the same way as adults progressing on Mezirow's TL outline of disorienting dilemma:

critical self-reflection, rational discourse, and reflective action.[136] Each experienced

transformational learning through incidents that "clearly changed the young women's

identity, self-awareness, worldview, perspectives, thinking, or actions."[137]

Other researchers have found that TL occurs as adolescents process significant,

disorienting events.[138] Marc Alongi, a high school director in Pasedena, California,

Benjamin Heddy, a professor at University of Oklahoma who studies cognitive and

motivational engagement, and Gale Sinatra, a professor of education at the University of

Southern California, observed TL in adolescents when they were guided in discussion of

controversial issues. Alongi, Heddy, and Sinatra conclude that the pedagogical practice of

intentionally guiding adolescents in studying controversial issues led to "significantly

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[135] Larson, "Adolescents' Self-Described Transformations and Their Alignments with Transformative Learning Theory."

[136] Larson, 183–84.

[137] Larson, 181.

[138] Good and Willoughby, "Adolescence as a Sensitive Period for Spiritual Development"; Christoph, Gniewosz, and Reinders, *How Does Community Service Promote Prosocial Behavior?*; Alongi, Heddy, and Sinatra, "Real-World Engagement with Controversial Issues in History and Social Studies"; Tavernier and Willoughby, "Adolescent Turning Points."

improved conceptual change" for the adolescents observed.[139] Studying a group of over 400 high school students, Tavernier and Willoghby conclude that adolescents have the ability to "create meaning out of turning points [significant life experiences]."[140]

Prerequisites to Adolescent Transformational Learning

Adolescents are able to learn and change to a degree that correlates with their neurobiological development and psychological well-being. Without these two significant inputs, adolescents are stunted in their ability to learn and develop in a transformative manner.

Neurobiological Development

Neurobiological development of adolescents is necessary for them to continue to learn and change appropriately as they progress to adulthood. Ronald Dahl, the founding director for the Center for the Developing Adolescent and the current director of the Institute of Human Development at the University of California at Berkeley, Nicholas Allen from the University of Oregon, and Linda Wilbrecht, and Ahna Suleiman, both of the University of California at Berkeley, summarize adolescent neurobiological development. Ironically, in adolescence, the brain develops and limits itself. In a limiting fashion, grey matter becomes thinner in the higher order regions of the brain and

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[139] Alongi, Heddy, and Sinatra, "Real-World Engagement with Controversial Issues in History and Social Studies," 26.

[140] Tavernier and Willoughby, "Adolescent Turning Points," 1058.

synapses are pruned.[141] Neurobiologists believe this thinning helps to "bring greater stability and efficiency."[142] This pruning is thought to open up and focus cognition. While synapses are pruned and grey matter thins during adolescence for stability and efficiency, the brain develops new connections via neurons between the frontal cortex and amygdala. As a result, cognitive and inhibitive regions of the brain gain more control over affective regions.[143] This neurobiological advance allows adolescents to think on a level outside of immediate physical needs.

Psychologist professors Marie Good and Teena Willoughby observe that adolescent cognitive development allows adolescents to evaluate different perspectives.[144] Dahl et al summarize the neurobiological outcomes of adolescents in four ways that include cognitive development and critical thinking. First, adolescents are growing in areas of exploration and sensation seeking. Second, adolescents are enhancing their ability to integrate multiple experiences. Third, adolescents are evaluating negative feedback or negative associations. Finally, Dahl et al find that adolescents are learning social information from their peers.[145] This cognitive development and critical reflection are the outcomes of neurobiological changes in adolescence.

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[141] Dahl et al., "Importance of Investing in Adolescence from a Developmental Science Perspective," 443.

[142] Dahl et al., 443.

[143] Dahl et al., 443.

[144] Marie Good and Teena Willoughby, "Evaluating the Direction of Effects in the Relationship Between Religious Versus Non-Religious Activities, Academic Success, and Substance Use," *Journal of Youth and Adolescence* 40, no. 6 (June 2011): 32, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-010-9581-y.

[145] Dahl et al., "Importance of Investing in Adolescence from a Developmental Science Perspective," 444.

The neurobiological changes in adolescence and the resulting outcomes are prerequisites for transformational learning. These outcomes are cognitive and social. Jack Mezirow, the founder of TL theory, initially grounded his theory in cognitive theory.[146] After critique, Mezirow developed his theory to include social and societal dynamics.[147] To experience TL, individuals have to be able to cognitively process differing viewpoints and challenge what they are experiencing, testing their tentative conclusions with others.[148] Following Dahl et al, adolescents are increasingly becoming able to process differing viewpoints as they cognitively develop the links between their amygdala and their frontal cortex.[149] Individuals have to interact with others' viewpoints, likes, and dislikes as they come to a conclusion. The skill sets and abilities made possible by neurobiological changes in adolescence are all needed in TL.

Psychological Well-Being

In addition to neurobiological development, adolescents are able to learn and change to a degree that correlates with their psychological well-being. Researchers

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[146] Sharan B. Merriam and SeonJoo Kim, "Studying Transformative Learning: What Methodology?," in *The Handbook of Transformative Learning: Theory, Research, and Practice*, ed. Edward W. Taylor and Patricia Cranton, 1st ed, Jossey-Bass Higher and Adult Education Series (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2012), 68.

[147] Baumgartner, "Mezirow's Theory of Transformative Learning from 1975 to Present"; Merriam and Kim, "Studying Transformative Learning: What Methodology?"; Patricia Cranton and Edward W. Taylor, "Transformative Learning Theory: Seeking a More Unified Theory," in *The Handbook of Transformative Learning: Theory, Research, and Practice*, ed. Edward W. Taylor and Patricia Cranton, 1st ed, Jossey-Bass Higher and Adult Education Series (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2012), 3–20.

[148] Sharan B. Merriam, "The Role of Cognitive Development in Mezirow's Transformational Learning Theory," *Adult Education Quarterly* 55, no. 1 (November 1, 2004): 60–68, https://doi.org/10.1177/0741713604268891.

[149] Dahl et al., "Importance of Investing in Adolescence from a Developmental Science Perspective."

Royette Taverier, a professor of developmental psychology at Wesleyan University, and Teena Willoughby, the director of the Adolescent Development Lab at Brock University, used a longitudinal study of 418 Canadian students asking them a series of questions about well-being, turning points, and meaning making in Grade 9 and then again in Grade 12. The researchers observed that the ability to make meaning from significant turning points is directly related to the adolescents' psychological well-being. The healthier an adolescent is psychologically, the more deeply they are able to change and learn.[150]

Evidence of Transformational Learning

There is a debate if STM contributes to TL in adolescents. Anthropologists, community development scholars, and some missiologists observe that STM is a form of religious tourism that perpetuates ethnocentrism. Other scholars, including anthropologists and missiologists, see evidence that STM can offer a TL experience for adolescents that instigates long-term change into adulthood.

Volunteerism and Civic Engagement

Adolescents who participate in domestic STM are significantly more likely to volunteer in a local or internationally focused organization when they become adults. Princeton University sociologist LiErin Probasco used the 2005 Religion and Global Issues Survey sponsored by Princeton University with over 2,200 respondents and found that the chance of a person who took a STM as an adolescent volunteering locally is 40

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[150] Tavernier and Willoughby, "Adolescent Turning Points."

percent greater than a person who did not take an STM as an adolescent.[151] Probasco also found that those who went on an STM as an adolescent "have more or less the same effect on volunteering, whether the potential volunteer is 25 or 65 [years old]."[152] Probasco concludes that this indicates a long-term transformational change in volunteering for individuals who participate in a domestic STM in adolescence.

In a separate but similar large study, researchers found STM participation by adolescents increases civic activity. Kraig Beyerlein from University of Notre Dame, Jenny Trinitapoli from Penn State University, and Gary Adler from University of Arizona studied the National Survey of Youth Religion with 3,372 respondents and observed significant positive correlation between STM and four areas of civic engagement. Most significant was STM's effect on formal volunteering. The second largest positive correlation with STM participation was donating to charitable causes, and thirdly, political participation. The chart shows the increased propensity to be involved in these areas of civic engagement in the immediate time after STM participation for an adolescent who has participated in STM versus an adolescent who has not participated in STM using data from the National Survey of Youth Religion.

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[151] Probasco, "Giving Time, Not Money," 216.

[152] Probasco, 218.

Table 3. Rate of Increased Civic Engagement from Adolescent STM[153]

Civic Activity:	Rate of increased likelihood of participating in civic activity of those who participated in adolescent STM vs. those who did not participate in STM:
Political Participation	38%
Donations to Charitable Causes	95%
Formal Volunteering	129%

Religious Engagement and Religious Beliefs

Transformational learning through STM has also been observed through increased religious engagement and increased religious beliefs. Jenny Trinitapoli of Penn State University and Stephen Vaisey of the University of California, Berkeley, observed longitudinal change of adolescents who participated in STM. Trinitapoli and Vaisey utilized the National Study of Youth and Religion, a large-scale, random telephone survey done in two waves, one in 2002 with 3,370 respondents, and a follow-up in 2005, where 2,604 of the original group were re-interviewed.[154] Compared to adolescents who do not participate on an STM, adolescents who do participate on an STM are more confident in their belief in God; they are more likely to view God in a personal rather than impersonal way; and they express more closeness to God.[155] However, Trinitapol and Vaisey found that STM did not make a difference in terms of religious doubt;

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[153] Beyerlein, Trinitapoli, and Adler, "The Effect of Religious Short-Term Mission Trips on Youth Civic Engagement," 789.

[154] Trinitapoli and Vaisey, "The Transformative Role of Religious Experience," 127.

[155] Trinitapoli and Vaisey, 138.

adolescents who participate on STM and those that do not were not observed to have any difference in religious doubt.[156]

Transformational Learning in Service Learning

Numerous researchers have pointed to the use of service learning as a catalyst for transformational learning.[157] Service learning utilizes four components: active learning, learning in a different context, reflection, and analysis. This combination of four components in service learning is an incubator for transformational learning.

Identifying SL Transformation

Researchers have observed evidence of worldview change for students in SL in the areas of intercultural competency and global citizenship. Bamber and Hankin reflect that the unfamiliar nature of service contexts, be it a homeless shelter or tutoring children, may foster perspective learning transformation as "the 'unfamiliar' helps the participants question the 'familiar.'"[158] The questions that service learning spurs can lead to transformational learning.

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[156] Trinitapoli and Vaisey, 138.

[157] Bringle, "Hybrid High-Impact Pedagogies"; Coyer et al., "Cultivating Global Learning Locally through Community-Based Experiential Education"; Bamber and Hankin, "Transformative Learning through Service-Learning"; Scott Mills, "The Integration of High School Students Serving among Families in Homeless Crisis for Transformational Ministry" (Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 2018), https://search.proquest.com/openview/59d8ad68c6e1ced17c685bd380dfd304/1.pdf?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750&diss=y.

[158] Bamber and Hankin, "Transformative Learning through Service-Learning," 195.

Intercultural Competency

Students who participate in service learning have been observed to grow in intercultural competency. Intercultural competency is "widely defined as the ability to communicate and interact appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitude."[159] Burrows, Snyder, and Ferro conducted a longitudinal study of intercultural development comparing undergraduate students who went on a service learning mission trip (SLMT) with those who did not. The researchers made a comprehensive instrument to assess intercultural competency. The instrument included twenty-three Likert-scaled questions based on the International Education of Students' Model Assessment Practice and Gagne's theory of learning.[160] The researchers found that participants who went on the SLMT "scored significantly higher than the control group on seven of eight intercultural competencies."[161] Those seven intercultural competencies were awareness, knowledge, behavior, intrapersonal, interpersonal, intellectual, and spiritual. Service learning can thus lead to participants increasing their intercultural competency.

Global Citizenship

Students who participate in service learning have also grown in global citizenship.[162] Global citizenship can be defined as an individual's ability to interact

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[159] Burrows, Snyder, and Ferro, "Perceived Longitudinal Effects of SLMTs," 169.

[160] Burrows, Snyder, and Ferro, 172.

[161] Burrows, Snyder, and Ferro, 173–74.

[162] Coyer et al., "Cultivating Global Learning Locally through Community-Based Experiential Education"; Bamber and Hankin, "Transformative Learning through Service-Learning"; Battistoni, Longo, and

intentionally and positively in a global context.[163] Compared to intercultural competency, global citizenship has an active component, namely citizenship, that is focused on the area of global systems.[164] Phil Bamber and Les Hankin, both researchers as Liverpool Hope University, studied secondary students participating in a local service learning program in Liverpool. While the service learning program was local, the students experienced world view transformation that led to different attitudes and practices toward poverty, climate change, and child rights.[165] Bamber and Hankin stress that the service learning component locally is combined with active reflection in a global context; students interact with teachers and attend conferences with students from other countries to reflect on their local service learning.[166]

Researchers reflect that while service learning can bring transformation in the area of global citizenship, it can also do the opposite, namely, confirm previous prejudice.[167] Bamber and Hankin reflect on some of the participants who confirm their previous perspectives rather than challenging them.[168] Bamber and Hankin conclude that the difference between students that challenge their own previous perspectives and those who do not is the interaction, or lack of interaction, that students had with educators who

Jayanandhan, "Acting Locally in a Flat World"; Decker and Hawkins, "Global Learning and Development as an Engagement Strategy for Christian Higher Education."

[163] Bamber and Hankin, "Transformative Learning through Service-Learning," 191.

[164] Bamber and Hankin, 191.

[165] Bamber and Hankin, 193–94.

[166] Bamber and Hankin, 221.

[167] Decker and Hawkins, "Global Learning and Development as an Engagement Strategy for Christian Higher Education," 278; Howell, *Short-Term Mission*; Priest and Priest, "'They See Everything, and Understand Nothing.'"

[168] Bamber and Hankin, "Transformative Learning through Service-Learning," 199–200.

encouraged the students' critical thinking. "Through critical reflection, learners discover an awareness of the role of power and their own agency to transform both society and their own reality."[169] Therefore, for service learning to bring about transformational change in global citizenship, students need to be challenged by an adult leading the reflection processes to think critically about their role in a global context.

Summary of Transformational Learning

Transformational learning (TL) describes how people change their worldview, beginning with a disorienting dilemma and proceeding to a changed outlook on the world. Adolescents experience TL much like adults, following Mezirow's outline of disorienting dilemma, critical self-reflection, rational discourse, and reflective action. Because adolescents are developing physiologically, they are able to experience TL only to the level of their neurobiological development. As grey matter thins and synapses are pruned, the adolescent brain is able to focus more and more efficiently. At the same time, the connection between the frontal cortex and amygdala is developing, allowing more control over affective regions. In order for this physiological change in adolescence to facilitate TL, the adolescent also needs to have a healthy psychological base. Without a healthy psychological base, TL is hampered for adolescents.

TL is observed in adolescents who participate in STM. This TL is long-term; STM adolescent participants engage significantly more in volunteering and civic areas, including political participation, donations to charities, and formal volunteering, in later adolescence and into adulthood. Adolescents who participate in STM are also more likely

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[169] Bamber and Hankin, 201.

to be more religiously engaged and have deeper religious convictions than those who do not participate in an STM as an adolescent.

Service learning (SL) is a significant facilitator of TL. Researchers have observed that SL develops students' intercultural competency and their sense of global citizenship. This transformation changes how students' think and interact in their context. SL students' transformed worldviews lead to changed attitudes and actions. The opposite can also occur as a result of SL; students may participate in SL and not come away changed in their thoughts and attitudes. Researchers believe the lack of adult-facilitated critical reflection during the SL process is why students are not transformed through SL.

Summary of Literature Review

This review has covered three areas of literature: short-term missions in Nehemiah 3 and 5; short-term missions in recent research; and transformational learning. Several important insights have come from this review. STM is evidenced in Nehemiah 3. Work teams from surrounding towns as far away as thirty-five kilometers came and stayed in Jerusalem while working on the walls. The author of this Old Testament book affirms that people from various backgrounds and towns worked together to finish the rebuilding of the walls. This dramatic, significant, collaborative, STM-based effort affirmed to the Jewish people and the surrounding nations their ancient world view that Jerusalem was the dwelling place of God. Nehemiah 5 shows that the impact of the collaborative, STM-based, wall building project led to transformative change for individuals and systemic change in Jewish society surrounding the treatment of the poor.

Turning to the contemporary people of God, STM is a foundational element of adolescent experience in the church in the USA. Roughly 28 percent of all adolescents, church going or not, have participated in STM. The percentage of individuals participating in STM has been growing for decades. That growth came as missiologists and church leaders debated the validity of STM in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. Youth pastors have come to see STM as an integral part of youth ministry; adolescent STM is here to stay and has a significant role in the modern church.

Research has shown that adolescent domestic STM has a positive impact on religious participation, volunteerism, and civic engagement. Adolescent participation in international STM does not make a significant long-term difference in volunteering. A significant question from this research is: Why do domestic STM trips have significantly more impact on adolescents than international STM trips?

Current STM research reveals that the best practices of service learning (SL) should be adapted to STM. First, guided reflection before, during, and after learning experiences helps students learn more deeply. Second, perspective taking helps students understand different viewpoints. These best practices lead to the possibility of worldview transformation, or transformational learning, during SL. Indeed, one research team coined the name, service learning mission trips (SLMT), as a new best practice hybrid. A potential question from this part of the literature review would be: To what degree should SL be a part of STM to facilitate transformational learning?

In addition to SL, global learning objectives have much to offer STM. The group of criteria that educators have developed to evaluate if an educational opportunity is fostering cultural sensitivity is a helpful tool in the STM toolkit. However, researchers,

missiologists, and anthropologists studying STM have not found GLO used regularly in planning and evaluating STM. The tools to use GLO are available, but they are being left in the toolbox. A key question here is: What is inhibiting the use of GLO in STM?

Many observers ask if STM can be transformational for adolescents. Adolescent neurobiological development study has shown that adolescents can process at a cognitive level for transformational change; adolescents can integrate multiple experiences, think on a level outside of their immediate physical needs, and grapple with opposing viewpoints. However, for adolescents to make a transformational change, they have to have sufficient psychological well-being. Adolescents are able to learn and change to a degree that correlates with their psychological well-being. A question not being asked in the STM research is: To what degree does psychological well-being impact STM learning?

Transformational learning (TL) has been observed in service learning (SL). Primarily, that TL is expressed in intercultural competency and global citizenship. At the same time, some participants in SL become entrenched in their previous views rather than being transformed. Research has shown that facilitated critical reflection is a key indicator of whether participants in SL have a transformative experience or not. Critical reflection facilitates TL in SL.

Thus, research has shown that STM can facilitate transformational learning in adolescents. That transformational learning is observed in many of the impacts of STM: volunteering, civic engagement, and religious engagement. In addition, research has found this transformational learning is long-lasting. One question that has not been

addressed in the research is: How do adolescent STM participants live out this

transformational learning in their church life as adults?

Chapter Three

Methodology

The purpose of this study is to examine how church leaders who were STM participants in the USA during high school engage local community needs years later. The National Survey of Youth and Religion's longitudinal, randomized interview of 3,370 youth aged 13-17 found 28 percent of youth have gone on a STM.[170] What are the long-term implications of these trips? Does the investment in STM bear long-term results? Does STM foster leadership development in the church? Can STM combat paternalistic behavior in church leaders? What evidence and impact of STM occurs in the Bible?

The assumption of this study was that the Bible has something to say about STM and that STM has a significant impact on the life of the church. Further, this study assumed that church leaders who had USA STM experience as high school students were influenced by these experiences. The question this study sought to understand was to what extent has past adolescent, domestic STM experience shaped church leaders' present work in their community. Was their past STM experience positively or negatively related to their current work in the community?

In order to address this purpose, the researcher followed a basic qualitative design. The following research questions guided the qualitative research:

1. How do church leaders describe the impact their high school STM had in their choice to be a church leader?

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[170] Trinitapoli and Vaisey, "The Transformative Role of Religious Experience," 128.

2. How do church leaders describe the transformational elements of their high
   school STM experience?

3. How do church leaders describe their engagement with local community
   needs immediately after the STM experience?

4. How do church leaders engage local community needs now?

Design of the Study

Qualitative research was used to gain a rich understanding of the impact of high school STM experience on current church leaders. This study fills the gap in understanding the impact of STM on church leaders. Sharan B. Merriam, professor emerita of adult education at the University of Georgia, and Elizabeth Tisdell, professor of adult education at Penn State University Harrisburg, in their book *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*, explain "the overall purpose [of qualitative research] is to *understand* how people make sense of their lives and their experiences."[171] With the understanding that comes with qualitative research, Merriam and Tisdell explain that qualitative study applied research "is undertaken to improve the quality of practice of a particular discipline."[172] This study seeks to help the church understand the impact of STM on church leaders and use that understanding to improve the practice of STM.

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[171] Sharan B Merriam and Elizabeth J Tisdell, *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*, 4th ed. (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2016), 24. Emphasis original.

[172] Merriam and Tisdell, 3.

This study employed a basic qualitative research design and conducted semi-structured interviews as the primary source of data gathering. This qualitative method provided for the discovery of more comprehensive and descriptive data from participant perspectives. Qualitative research is focused on an inductive process that is focused on gaining meaning and understanding.[173] Semi-structured interviews provide the data gathering venue to study the impact of past STM experience on current church leaders.

In order to understand the impact of STM on church leaders, this qualitative research study utilized purposeful sampling to gather information-rich cases.[174] Merriam and Tisdell state that a "nonrandom, *purposeful*, and small"[175] sampling is the most common type for qualitative research. Purposeful sampling allows the researcher to "discover, understand, and gain insight and then select a sample from which the most can be learned."[176] From this purposeful sample of STM participants who are now church leaders, the researcher gathered rich descriptions of the participants' past experiences[177] and focused on "meaning in context."[178]

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[173] Merriam and Tisdell, 15–17.

[174] Merriam and Tisdell, 96.

[175] Merriam and Tisdell, 18.

[176] Merriam and Tisdell, 96.

[177] Merriam and Tisdell, 16.

[178] Merriam and Tisdell, 2.

Participant Sample Selection

This research required participants who are able to communicate in depth about domestic STM experience when they were in high school and who are currently in church leadership. The study focused on understanding the meaning current church leaders have constructed from their high school STM experience.[179] Therefore, the purposeful study sample consisted of a selection of people from the population of current church leaders who participated in a high school domestic STM trip.

Purposeful, non-probability sampling was initiated to gather in-depth data from information-rich cases.[180] Due to limited time, the sample set was small to gain a deep understanding of the participants' experience. The sample set was also atypical. To gain data towards best practices, the researchers sought participants who self-reported remembering their STM experience in high school and being able to identify its impact on their current work in the church.

In order to narrow the sample breadth, high school STM participation was limited to evangelical STM. However, the participants varied in terms of gender and ethnicity to capture a diverse evangelical experience.

For this study, "church leaders" fit a definition of working at least five years in a formal ministry position where they are leading other church members and have designated responsibilities recognized by the church community. That ministry position could be voluntary or paid. The ministry position could also be with a church or

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[179] Merriam and Tisdell, 15.

[180] Merriam and Tisdell, 96.

parachurch organization. Participants were from a breadth of Christian traditions, both

Protestant and Catholic, as well as different genders and ethnicities.

The researcher used his twenty years of work in the STM community to identify

participants currently in church leadership and self-identify that their high school STM

experience has a current impact on their church work. Participants were recruited via

phone calls and email to STM leaders, church leaders, and youth pastors.

The final study was conducted through personal interviews with eight church

leaders. They were invited to participate via an introductory email, followed by a

personal phone call. All expressed interest and gave written informed consent to

participate. In addition, each participant signed a "Research Participant Consent Form" to

respect and to protect the human rights of the participants.

RESEARCH PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT FORM
FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

I agree to participate in the research which is being conducted by Andrew Stern to
investigate Short-Term Missions for the Doctor of Ministry degree program at Covenant
Theological Seminary.
I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary. I can withdraw my consent at any
time without penalty and have the results of the participation, to the extent that they can
be identified as mine, returned to me, removed from the research records, and/or
destroyed.

The following points have been explained to me:

1) The purpose of the research is to investigate how current church leaders observe the
   impact of their adolescent Short-Term Missions experiences on their current ministry
   experience.

2) Potential benefits of the research may include understanding the role of adolescent
   Short-Term Missions on future church leaders; observing how adolescent Short-Term
   Mission participants experience transformation over many years; and exploring the
   role of domestic Short-Term Missions in the life of church leaders. There are no
   direct benefits for participants, but the hope of the researcher is that the participants
   will be encouraged through experience of sharing their experiences.

3) The research process will include six to eight participants who will be interviewed for one hour via in-person or zoom-based interviews that are recorded.

4) Participants in this research will be interviewed for one-hour concerning their past adolescent Short-Term Mission experience and concerning their present ministry experience.

5) Potential discomforts or stresses: Participants may be uncomfortable describing past experiences or sharing present stresses in their workplace.

6) Potential risks: Minimal: Participants who are church leaders are asked to share their experience from an adolescent Short-Term Mission trip and their current church ministry experience. Participants will be asked if their adolescent Short-Term Mission experience influenced their worldview, behaviors, attitudes or beliefs. Participants may become tired or weary as they share their past experience.

7) Any information that I provide will be held in strict confidence. At no time will my name be reported along with my responses. The data gathered for this research is confidential and will not be released in any individually identifiable form without my prior consent, unless otherwise required by law. Audiotapes or videotapes of interviews will be erased following the completion of the dissertation. By my signature, I am giving informed consent for the use of my responses in this research project.

8) Limits of Privacy: I understand that, by law, the researcher cannot keep information confidential if it involves abuse of a child or vulnerable adult or plans for a person to harm themselves or to hurt someone else.

9) The researcher will answer any further questions about the research, now or during the study.

_____

Printed Name and Signature of Researcher   Date

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Printed Name and Signature of Participant   Date

Please sign both copies of this form. Keep one. Return the other to the researcher. Thank you.

Research at Covenant Theological Seminary which involves human participants is overseen by the Institutional Review Board. Questions or problems regarding your rights as a participant should be addressed to: Director, Doctor of Ministry; Covenant Theological Seminary; 12330 Conway Road; St. Louis, MO 63141; Phone (314) 434-4044.

Data Collection

This study utilized semi-structured interviews for primary data gathering.[181] Semi-structured interviews allow "the researcher to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic."[182] Open-ended interview questions aid the researcher in gathering in depth data and prevent leading participants to certain answers.[183] Semi-structured interviews utilizing open-ended questions enabled this study to look for common themes, patterns, concerns, and contrasting views across the variation of participant data.

The researcher performed a field test of the interview protocol to evaluate the process of data collection and edited the protocol further to gain more relevant data to the research questions. During the process of interviewing participants, the researcher began coding and categorizing the data.[184] The process of evaluating and coding the data while the data was being collected allowed the researcher to probe more deeply in later interviews and identify new trends in the data.

The researcher interviewed eight church leaders for one hour each. Prior to the interview, the participants signed a release form. In order to accommodate participant schedules and the safety issues of Covid-19, the researcher recorded Zoom meetings and

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[181] Merriam and Tisdell, 110.

[182] Merriam and Tisdell, 111.

[183] Merriam and Tisdell, 120–21.

[184] Merriam and Tisdell, 195.

audiotaped the interviews with a digital recorder. By conducting two interviews per week, the researcher completed the data gathering in the course of four weeks. Following Miriam and Tisdell's best practices for qualitative data collection, the researcher wrote field notes with descriptive and reflective observations on the interview time immediately after each interview.[185]

The interview protocol contained the following questions.

1. Opening question: Tell me about your experience participating in a short-term mission trip in high school. What was a highlight of that trip?

2. What are words or phrases that you would use to encapsulate your short-term trip experience?

3. How did your STM experience influence your choice to be involved in church work?

4. How do you relate your high school STM trip to your church work today? What similarities are there? What differences are there?

5. How would you describe your STM trip impact on you in high school?

6. How was your participating in your neighborhood, school, youth group or church different after you participated in the STM?

7. Are there experiences in your church work today that make you reflect on your STM trip in high school?

8. Are there elements of your STM trip that you see applied in your work currently in the church?

9. What are ways you lead your church in community involvement now?

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[185] Merriam and Tisdell, 197.

Probing Questions:

How did that make your feel? Tell me more…

What facilitated that? How would you describe that?

What did you learn from that experience?

Participant Letter

Dear Potential Interview Participant,

Thank you very much for considering participating in my doctoral research. As you know, I have been working on a Doctor of Ministry at Covenant Theological Seminary. I am beginning my research for the dissertation. My research topic concerns the impact of high school short term mission trips on church leaders. I am conducting a qualitative study in which I will interview church leaders who participated in short term missions in high school and who feel they were substantially influenced by that experience. I will compare the interview information with research on the topic.

This research required participants who participated in a high school mission trip as an adolescent and who were church leaders with five years of experience. Participants also self-reported before that their adolescent STM experience was significant in their life. I will interview those interested about their experience and how it informs their current church work.

To complete my degree in a timely fashion, I want to conduct interviews during this month. When I have finished the research, I will be eager to share my results and conclusions with you, if you are interested.

If you choose to participate with me, I will ask you to do the following:

1. Complete the enclosed consent form.

2. Discuss your experience as a high school student on a short-term mission trip and its influence on you.

3. Possibly review relevant sections of my written report of the interview to check for accuracy and completeness.

Participation is wholly voluntary, and participants are free to withdraw at any time. In order to provide participant anonymity, I will not report names with responses. Please be assured that any information you provide will be held in strict confidence. At no time will your name be reported along with your responses. Pseudonyms will be used in all written material in this study. Please contact me if you have any questions regarding this research. Thank you for your interest and consideration. Your assistance in crucial in helping me with this research. I appreciate your time very much. I will call you in a couple of days to ask for your decision in participating.

Sincerely,

Andrew Stern, D.Min. Student

Data Analysis

The researcher transcribed each interview by using computer software to play back the digital recording on a computer and typing out each transcript into Word documents. The constant comparison method was utilized to analyze the data throughout

the interview process.[186] This method provided for the ongoing revision, clarification, and evaluation of the resultant data categories following the best practices for qualitative research.[187]

The fully transcribed interviews were coded and analyzed using colors and lists. The analysis focused on discovering and identifying (1) common themes and patterns across the variation of participants; and (2) congruence or discrepancy between the different groups of participants.

Researcher Position

The purpose of this study is to examine how church leaders who participated in a domestic STM during high school engage local community needs years later. The researcher has twenty years of experience in leading STM. That experience is an opportunity for favorable bias towards STM, with a particularly strong capacity to understand the participant data from an insider perspective. The experience also provides an incentive to see STM practice improve.

The researcher holds to the authority of the Bible in areas of life and faith and values objective research exploring the whole of creation. This worldview leads the researcher to value the well-being of all humans and the flourishing of community. His biblical worldview also has a bias towards desiring the church to work purposefully for the benefit of the surrounding civic community. This bias may lead the researcher to overstate the influence of church activity in a community.

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[186] Merriam and Tisdell, 201–2.

[187] Merriam and Tisdell, 197.

Study Limitations

The participants interviewed were limited to those who had participated in a high school STM in the USA and who are currently serving the church. Therefore, the study does not necessarily apply to international STM participants, adolescents in other countries who participate in STM, or to college or adult STM participants. However, some of the study's findings may be generalized to other STM participants or church workers. Readers who desire to generalize some of the particular aspects of these conclusions should test those aspects in their particular context. As with all qualitative studies, readers bear the responsibility to determine what can be appropriately applied to their context. The results of this study may have implications for the church worldwide outside of the USA context.

Chapter Four

Findings

The purpose of this study was to examine how church leaders who participated in a domestic STM during high school engage local community needs years later. This chapter provides the findings of seven interviews with church leaders and reports on common themes and relevant insights pertaining to the research questions. In order to address the purpose of this study, the following research questions guided the qualitative research.

1. How do church leaders describe the impact of their high school STM had in their choice to be a church leader?

2. How do church leaders describe the transformational elements of their high school STM experience?

3. How do church leaders describe their engagement with local community needs immediately after the STM experience?

4. How do church leaders engage local community needs now?

Introductions to Participants and Context

The researcher selected church leaders to participate in this study. All names and identifiable participant information have been changed to protect identity. Participants had gone on at least one domestic STM in high school and had at least five years of experience as paid staff working for an evangelical Christian ministry or church.

Impact of Domestic STM on Choice to Be a Church Leader

The first research question addressed the impact of a domestic STM on the individual's choice to be a church leader. Participants had two primary responses. First, all the participants related that their STM experience in high school had a significant impact on their calling into church ministry. Second, six of the seven participants said the STM played a key role in affirming their role specifically as leaders.

Calling to Christian Ministry

All seven participants related that their experience during their domestic STM had a significant impact on their calling to church ministry. Four of the participants felt a direct calling from God during their STM to work in Christian ministry. The other three participants described the STM as a part of God's trajectory that moved them towards Christian ministry.

Calling to Christian Ministry: "My First Call to Ministry"

Four of the participants described a direct, specific calling from God to Christian ministry during their domestic STM in high school. Two participants described receiving this calling during their personal, guided devotional times. Kendra explains:

> I'm remembering one morning very early as the sun was rising on the Navajo Reservation... I had this kind of moment with the Lord of saying, "You're more real to me now than ever before, and I want to serve you. I want to serve you with my life…. [The STM experience] really drew me to working in the church setting."

Abby explained a similar direct call from God to Christian ministry as she was journaling during a personal, guided devotional time.

Two participants linked their direct calling to leadership during a STM trip. Specifically, these two participants understood God was calling them into Christian ministry when their youth pastors gave them leadership responsibilities. Travis shared that this calling was the most significant aspect of his STM in high school. "The biggest thing on that mission trip was…where I did feel my first call to ministry." Travis went on to say that this calling came after his youth pastor asked him to lead a group evangelistic service. Tom had a similar experience when his youth pastor gave him significant leadership responsibilities during the STM. During the trip, he realized that he could lead God's people and that he wanted to and felt a direct call.

Calling to Christian Ministry: The STM "Messed Up My Life"

Three of the participants shared that their domestic STM experience was one link calling them into church leadership. While they did not have a direct calling from God during the STM, they described it as a steppingstone. Jen described always wanting to be a missionary from an early age, and the STM affirmed that calling.

Joe described the STM experience as one that "messed up my life." For Joe, the STM revealed what the church should be: a vehicle to show Jesus' love. This vision appealed to Joe, and he began to participate in new ministries his STM team started when they returned home. This progression led Joe to move into an urban neighborhood with his wife and begin a significant Christian community development group. Joe shared that his domestic STM was the first link that affirmed his calling to serve and live in an at-risk urban neighborhood.

Affirmation of Leadership Gifting

Six of the seven participants shared that their high school domestic STM experience was a significant affirmation of their leadership gifting. Primarily, the affirmation came as youth pastors leading the high school STM gave students leadership roles to prepare before the trip and roles leading during the trip. Most participants remembered, sometimes thirty years after their experience, how they organized meetings to prepare the STM, led vacation Bible club worship, organized skits for vacation Bible school, and led work projects.

For several of the participants, their high school STM experience was the first time they understood they had leadership gifting or ability. Jake, a senior pastor with a congregation of several thousand on the West Coast, shared that he went into the STM thinking leadership was "scary" and that others were "more morally, spiritually… qualified than me." After his STM experience, Jake said, "Leadership is something that I'm capable of and that people need…so I came back and served…in my youth group." He also observed that after this first leadership experience, he continued exercising leadership in his youth group after the STM.

Kendra, a senior executive staff member at her church, reflected, "I was a leader on at least one or two of those [STM] trips. And again, that just gave me an experience of, 'You, Kendra, have gifts that can be used in the church.'" Kendra added that her leadership experience on the domestic STM helped uncover her leadership gifts.

Summary of STM Impact on Choice to Be a Church Leader

All seven participants related that their experience during their domestic STM in high school had a significant impact on their calling to work in the church. For most of

the participants, they experienced that calling directly during the STM. For the balance of the participants, they believe their STM experience in high school was a significant steppingstone to their eventual calling to Christian ministry.

In addition to calling, six of the seven participants experienced significant affirmation of their leadership gifting. For many, the STM was the first time they exercised leadership gifts. From the study of the seven participants, it can be concluded that STM had a significant impact on their choice to be a church leader.

Church Leaders' Description of Transformational Elements of Their High School Domestic STM

The second research question addressed participants' description of the transformational elements of their STM. This question was split into two elements: challenging elements and influential elements. Participants described the challenging elements from two primary areas: settings during their STM and perspectives they experienced during their STM. In terms of influential elements, most participants described the people they interacted with at their host site and the people from their church who participated on the trip with them.

Challenging Settings and Perspectives

All seven participants related that their high school domestic STM was challenging. Six out of the seven participants referenced the setting of their STM specifically. All the participants' perspectives were challenged during their STM experience.

Challenging Settings: "Disequiliberating"

The settings of the participants' domestic STM experiences ranged from rural to urban, included a multitude of racial and ethnic settings, and also included various degrees of leadership demands. While the settings were diverse, significant challenges were common.

Some participants described themselves as being taken "out of their comfort zone," referencing times they were "scared" and "vulnerable." Several participants expressed being challenged around settings of poverty. Jake, who grew up in a suburban neighborhood, describes being challenged by going to "areas that were…much more poor than where we grew up."

Meeting people of different ethnicities was also challenging, because, for some of them, the STM was the first time they had related to people from different cultures. Tom related:

> You're thrown into a new world; you're experiencing lots of firsts…meeting new refugees and interacting with them. That was a first…and so experiencing all those things is…disequilibrating.

In contrast, one participant related how meeting people of the same race but of different socio-economic status was "disorienting":

> [We met people] who lived in the bayou, and it was disorienting. I remember… white people who were poor, because it didn't fit the narrative. Because in the city where I grew up, white people live in the suburbs, and black people were poor.

For this participant, the disorientation was not the difference of a specific aspect of the setting but, rather, a specific similarity.

Most of the participants remarked that their domestic STM experiences contrasted with their experiences of international STM either in high school or later in life. Several

of the participants commented that a domestic STM setting provided an "appropriate" challenge while an international STM provided too much challenge to process. Abby explained, "As a high schooler, I didn't have to navigate visa lines…filling out custom forms and…overseas stuff." She explained that the similarities of her domestic STM with her home setting made it a positive experience. Comparing her domestic STM with her international STM, Abby shared, "It was like getting your feet wet without drowning."

For one participant, the domestic STM was more "disorienting" than international STM experiences. The participant shared that the domestic STM was more "disorienting" because the differences in culture didn't come from being in another country, but rather, the participant experienced different cultures while still in their home country.

Challenging Perspectives

All seven participants said their perspectives were challenged during their domestic STM experience in high school as areas of "black and white" thinking and bias came to light.

Challenging "Black and White" Perspectives

Several participants said they entered their STM with an overly simplified and naive perspective on life. Tom explained a "black and white" perspective as believing that what someone puts into something is what that person gets out of it; hard work guarantees success, and failure comes from a lack of trying hard enough. Right and wrong are clearly defined. Tom reflected that the STM was a "disequilibrating experience" that showed "real life is more complex and messy than…we want to

believe." Like Tom, Abby described a "black and white" perspective revolving around work and how society functions; if people are poor, they must be irresponsible and immoral. If people are economically self-sufficient, they must be responsible and moral. These "black and white" perspectives were challenged on the STM.

For most of the participants, their perspective didn't change right away. Participants said that the STM experience began what became perspective change. Jake shared his "simple view of a cause-and-effect economic world inputs and outputs that are clean." Jake concluded that his STM experience was "probably the beginning of that [view] being undermined." The STM for most participants was a catalyst that began a process of changing their "black and white" perspectives of the world.

Challenging Perspectives: Getting Out of the "Bubble" of Bias

Most of the participants said that their racial and cultural biases were also challenged during their high school STM. Abby noted that she stepped out of her "bubble" for the first time, which helped her understand her family's racist perspective:

> I think growing up [in the suburbs]... my world was predominantly white…now I have learned a lot more of [the] racist overtones in my own family and extended family that I wouldn't have known…what it was at the time. Yeah, so now looking back I think that was the first time I could step out of this little bubble world that I lived in, but I didn't know anything different.

Like Abby, Tom described that his STM experience as "chipping away" at his bias. As he reflected on his experience, he said, "It was amazing how resilient the rhetoric and the political positions and even the marriage of politics and Christianity were."

Jake shared that initially his domestic STM confirmed his pre-existing narrative on his "superiority:"

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> I think I definitely went into [the domestic STM] with a sense of superiority… [I am] here to serve these inferior people. Meeting grown men who were illiterate was totally disorienting, and it was definitely validating my narrative of, "These people don't have much to offer me."

However, Jake shared that Christian leaders hosting his STM trip treated their illiterate neighbors with "compassion" and "dignity." The example of his hosts challenged his perspectives. Jake concluded, "I left with that cognitive dissonance still in place, [and] it probably stayed there for years." Years later his perspective did change, he said; the STM began the process of changing his biases and broadening his perspectives.

Influential People and Skills

Participants shared that they were impacted by the people they met and the skills they developed during their domestic STM in high school. Five of the participants reflected on specific stories from individuals they met. Most of the participants also reflected on specific people whose lives made a significant impact on them. Several of the participants highlighted skills they learned and developed on their STM.

Influential People: "Their Testimonies Blew Me Away!"

All seven participants referred to specific people who powerfully influenced them during their STM. Most reflected on stories from these individuals that challenged their perspectives. Kendra relates how the stories she heard broke down her prejudice:

> [A]s we learned people stories, it just broke down that fear and helped me realize, "You're judging people." …Their testimonies of faith blew me away! I mean, they were way stronger in their faith than I was. And so, I think that was a really a big lesson in my life of be[ing] careful not to prejudge…people.

As Kendra reflected on the stories of single moms that she met, she was surprised by their faith. This reflection led to a lifelong lesson not to prejudge people based on the appearance of their neighborhood.

Several participants reflected on the commitment of their hosts. One participant related that she was deeply influenced by the Navajo pastors and church members she met during her STM. Though she would leave, the Navajo pastors wouldn't. They had sacrificed their lives to lead their people and stay on the reservation. The participant reflected that she still thinks about the commitment of her STM hosts in her work as a missionary.

Several of the participants reflected on the stories of people who moved into poor neighborhoods for the purpose of serving people there. Joe reflects that hearing these stories "messed up my life." The stories influenced him later in life as a church leader when he moved into a poor neighborhood himself.

Several of the participants reflected on the role of senior pastors from their home churches who either went on the STM, prayed for them on the STM, or processed their experience afterwards. Tom reflected that his elders and senior pastor, who participated on the STM, influenced his life on a personal level:

> I think for me one of the really formative things as a leader was just to be able to sit with [the senior pastor and elders]... how often does a high-school student have time just to sit for couple hours with their senior pastor and talk… this is the first time I had a close relationship with a pastor…They spoke into my life on a theological level, on a personal level, on a ministry level.

For Tom, the STM helped him get to know his senior pastor on a personal level. Several other participants related that the STM experience was a springboard for relating to their senior pastors. Kendra began to process the role of the church in meeting physical needs

of poor people with her pastor after her STM. Jake shared he was inspired and encouraged when his senior pastor prayed for their STM team before they left. When the STM returned, Jake's senior pastor made time for the team to share their experience in front of the whole congregation. For many of the participants, the STM was a catalyst to strengthen ties with church leaders in their home church.

Long Term Ministry Skills

Several of the participants reflected on skills they learned or developed on their STM. Most of the participants reflected on leadership skills. Jake remembers fifteen years later the leadership principles that he was taught on the STM and continues to use and teach today as a senior pastor.

Several of the participants reflected on pastoral skills they developed on their STM. Tom learned the power of writing personal notes during his STM. Tom remembers being led by the Holy Spirit to write a note to another high school student for encouragement. Since becoming a youth pastor, Tom shared that he uses personal written notes as a pastoral tool to encourage students fifteen years after the Holy Spirit stirred him to write a note to another high school student on his STM.

Summary of the Transformational Elements of Church Leaders who Participated in a Domestic STM in High School

All seven participants related that their experience during their domestic STM in high school challenged their perspectives of how they think about the world. For most of the participants, the setting of their high school domestic STM challenged their perceptions. The close proximity and relative safety of the domestic STM led several of

the participants to say the setting of their domestic STM was more conducive to challenging their perceptions than international STM. Many said their concrete, "black and white," perception of the world was also challenged, leading them to consider worldviews different from their own.

In addition, most of the participants shared that their bias was challenged. For those participants who biases around race and culture did not change during the STM, they were significantly challenged by their experience, and it was part of an eventual transformation of their bias. For others, their perceptions of race and culture did change during the STM. The change in perceptions of race and culture came as they heard and reflected on stories from their STM hosts from different cultures and ethnicities.

STM hosts were powerful influences for most of the participants. Their stories and life examples made impressions that have lasted for decades. For some, they changed their perspectives almost immediately, but for most, the transformation of their perceptions came later in life. Their STM experience was part of the eventual change.

Beside the hosts, participants noted the involvement of fellow church members, especially senior pastors, who participated either during the STM or in support of the STM as highly influential. The involvement of the senior pastor helped in processing their experience and encouraged participants that their involvement in the STM was valuable and supported by the church.

Most participants appreciated skills they learned and developed on their high school STM as valuable years later. Leadership and pastoral skills were the most common skills learned and developed on their STM. Most continue to use those skills today and teach others those same skills.

Immediate Applications of STM

The third research question asked what immediate applications participants made when they returned home from their high school domestic STM. Most participants reflected that they applied what they had learned to one of three areas: their high school, their neighborhood, or their church.

At School: "I Started a Bible Study at My High School"

Several of the participants started Bible studies at their public schools after participating in their domestic STM. This initiative was significant in terms of leadership and impact; participants shared that fellow high school students became Christians and were baptized as a result of these Bible studies. Kendra shared her experience of starting a Bible study at her public school:

> I think those mission trips gave me opportunities to share the gospel that was practice to say, "You could do this at school, too." So, I started a Bible study at my high school.

Like Kendra, Jake started a Bible study with another student who had gone on an international STM. Eventually, Jake's Bible study at his public school had several hundred students attending and many being baptized.

In Their Neighborhood: Thirty English Language Learners

Most participants returned from their STM and applied what they had learned in their neighborhood. Several began working with or leading ministries with immigrants and refugees. Soon after her domestic STM, Jen helped lead a ministry teaching English to immigrants that grew to thirty English language learners. Jen also began friendships with Hispanic co-workers at her job in a fast food restaurant.

Many of the participants plugged into ministries similar to the work done during their STM. Several who had tutored children joined ministries tutoring children. Others who had participated in evangelism continued developing that skill at home. Three of the participants who had connected with seniors participated in nursing home ministries after their experience.

In Their Church: Changing "My Life Trajectory"

All the participants increased their church involvement and either began or increased their church leadership roles after they returned from their STM. Several started working for their church during high school or immediately after high school in administration or as youth leaders. Many increased their leadership in their youth group, which included positions in worship, future STM trips, and forming new ministries.

Several shared that they made significant sacrifices to participate in and lead their youth programs after their STM experience. Abby decided to lead a future high school STM trip rather than continuing her music program. Travis shared that his experience changed his "life trajectory":

> My life trajectory became more about going into ministry. I remember my junior year of high school, I decided I wanted to play baseball again. And tryouts were the same week as spring break, but then we were also taking a youth trip that weekend. And so, I was like, "Pick one or the other," and I chose the youth trip because I wanted to be around the ministry. I wanted to be soaking it in.

Travis shared that his choice to not pursue baseball was directly tied to working out the direct calling to Christian ministry he received during his high school STM.

Summary of Immediate Application of STM

All of the participants made immediate applications of what they had learned in their domestic STM. Several made significant impact in their public schools by starting Bible studies that resulted in fellow students becoming Christians. Most started volunteering in neighborhoods in ways that mimicked what they had experienced on their STM, such as tutoring or visiting seniors. Some of the participants began assisting immigrants in their neighborhoods after their STM experience.

All of the participants increased their church participation and either began or increased their church leadership responsibilities after their domestic STM experience. A few participants began working for their churches in administration and as youth staff workers. Most of the participants began or increased participation in church ministries focused on immigrants and refugees, tutoring children, evangelism, and working with seniors. Many began volunteer leadership positions as high school students leading worship and future STM trips with their youth groups.

How Church Leaders Engage Local Community Needs Now

The fourth research question addressed how participants are engaging their local community needs now. Participants engage community needs in three primary ways: meeting physical needs, crossing cultural boundaries, and moving into physically poor communities. All are currently engaged in meeting physical needs and crossing cultural boundaries in their local communities. Most have moved into physically poor communities to engage the needs of the community.

Meeting Physical Needs

All of the participants are currently meeting physical needs in their communities. The variety of participants' current involvement in meeting physical needs was extensive. Participants shared they were involved in tutoring children, assisting seniors, addressing healthcare needs in their community, participating in ministries assisting immigrants and refugees, helping ex-offenders who have been released from prison, helping individuals with job training, providing food for neighbors, talking with neighbors who have experienced trauma, and becoming foster and adoptive parents. While the breadth of participants' activity in meeting physical needs is extensive, it can be broken down into three areas: meeting children's physical needs; meeting physical needs through the venue of their family; and meeting physical needs in a systemic manner.

One way that most of the participants are meeting physical needs of children in their communities is through tutoring, education, and afterschool programming. Abby volunteers at a local tutoring ministry. Jake is a senior pastor who has led his church to focus on sponsoring and volunteering at programs that focus on women and their children. In addition to meeting the needs of children, most of the participants assist in practical needs of adults. Two of the participants are involved in feeding those who are food insecure. Two other participants are involved in job training.

A second way that most of the participants were meeting physical needs of their community was in the context of the family. Kendra and her husband have fostered children and adopted children. Abby and her husband are currently enrolled in foster care classes. Two other participants are currently praying about becoming foster parents. Most

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talked about having neighbors in their homes and intentionally engaging non-church neighbors in their community on a regular basis.

A third manner that participants were meeting physical needs in their community was through comprehensive community development models. Joe began a Christian community development organization that offers wraparound services to families. Children may go to the tutoring program, and their parents may receive help with job training. In addition, Joe's organization has started a health ministry that provided 8,000 medical appointments last year. Kendra's church also provides wraparound services through a network of ministries to address issues in a systemic way. Both Joe's Christian community development organization and Kendra's church are addressing physical community needs and issues in a systemic and comprehensive manner.

Crossing Cultural Boundaries

Participants are addressing community needs by crossing cultural boundaries and training their church members to cross cultural boundaries. One of the primary vehicles used is STM. Another way is outreach to immigrants and refugees.

Sending and Hosting STM Teams

All of the participants are involved in STM to encourage and to train their churches in crossing cultural boundaries. Some send their church members on STM to strengthen cross-cultural training of their members. Others are on the receiving end of hosting STM teams and train these teams in cross cultural interaction.

Sending STM Teams to Cross Cultural Boundaries

Most of the participants shared that they send STM teams from their church to train their congregations in crossing cultural boundaries. Following his domestic high school STM experience, Jake, a senior pastor, became a significant supporter of STM because it provides training in how to cross cultural and socio-economic lines. When asked how he engages local community needs, Joe explains:

> [We] take adults on short-term trips now, and a huge part of that is my belief in their formative role, especially since we are in a really affluent part of the city, and the cross-cultural and cross socio-economic exposure is an important formative tool.

Joe believes STM is a valuable tool to expose and to teach his congregation how to understand people from different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds.

Most of the participants shared that, like Joe, they are using STM to expose and train their congregations to cross cultural boundaries. Three use STM to train and disciple their youth. All three relate their own experience as part of the reason they use STM today in their ministry.

Hosting STM Teams to Cross Cultural Boundaries

While several of the participants send their congregants on STM to gain cross-cultural exposure and training, three host STM teams for the same reason. Abby and her husband have spent much of their ministry experience hosting STM teams to broaden participants' cultural exposure and help them understand the diversity believers will experience in heaven. Abby explains that STM exposes participants to "all the different people that God has made…I think that's really important because heaven is not going to look like all the people that look like us." Like Abby, other participants believe hosting

STM is valuable for exposing, training, and appreciating the results that come from crossing cultural boundaries.

Outreach to Immigrants and Refugees

Another primary vehicle to cross cultural boundaries is outreach to immigrants and refugees. Jake and others at his church are supporting ministries and recruiting volunteers to help undocumented immigrants get documentation. Abby shared that much of her and her husband's work is connecting churches with immigrants and refugees.

Kendra helps the church meet the needs of immigrants as part of her executive role. While Kendra is implementing this work system-wide, she is also personally helping immigrants as they arrive to acclimate to the United States.

Moving to Poor Neighborhoods to Serve

Most of the participants have intentionally moved into a poor neighborhood as adults. Three of the participants moved into a poor community in an urban domestic context, and one participant became a missionary in South America working among the poor.

Joe links his decision to move into a poor urban context to serve there with his domestic STM as a high school student. After coming back from his domestic STM, Joe's fellow STM participants, including some elders, were challenged to apply what they had learned in their Midwestern city. The team had tutored and put on a backyard Bible club in an apartment complex during their STM. When they returned to their hometown, Joe, the elders, and other high school students did the same in an apartment complex. As adults, Joe and his wife moved into the poor urban neighborhood to be close

to the children they were tutoring in that apartment complex, the same ministry work that had started after his high school STM.

Kendra reflected that her experience moving into a poor urban neighborhood as an adult had many similarities to her domestic STM experience of going to an urban poor neighborhood. Many of the same prejudices that she faced as a high school student she faces today. In the same way, the lesson she learned, not to prejudge others, she uses as she is walking with people now.

Summary of How Church Leaders Engage in Community Needs Now

Participants engage local community needs in simple, significant, individual, and systemic ways. All the participants are actively involved in meeting local community needs. In terms of physical needs, the participants meet needs across a wide spectrum: tutoring children, helping single mothers, starting a school for at-risk children, healthcare, providing food for the hungry, job training, and various other ministries. The three primary areas are via meeting children's physical needs; meeting physical needs through the venue of their family; and meeting physical needs in a systemic manner.

Church leaders are also engaging local community needs by crossing cultural boundaries. All the participants are using STM as a vehicle to teach their congregants and to serve needy communities. Most of the participants are sending STM teams out to expose and train their churches in how to cross cultural boundaries. Three of the participants are on the receiving end of STM teams; they are hosting them for the purpose training church members how to meet basic needs as they cross cultural boundaries.

The fourth research question addressed how participants are engaging their local community needs now. Participants engage community needs in three primary ways:

meeting physical needs, crossing cultural boundaries, and moving into physically poor communities. All of the participants are currently engaged in meeting physical needs and crossing cultural boundaries in their local communities. Many have moved into physically poor communities to engage the needs of the community.

Summary of Findings

This chapter examined how church leaders who participated in a domestic STM during high school engage local community years later. First, church leaders were asked to describe the impact of their high school STM in becoming a church leader. All seven participants shared that their experience during their STM had a significant impact on their being calling to church ministry. Most described a direct, specific calling from God to Christian ministry during their high school STM. Those who did not experience a call while on their STM described the STM as part of their trajectory to Christian ministry.

In addition, six of the seven participants shared that their domestic high school STM was a significant affirmation of their leadership gifting. This affirmation came as participants were given significant leadership roles before, during, and after their STM experience. For some of the participants, it was the first time they had been given leadership responsibilities in the church.

Church leaders were asked to describe transformational elements of their domestic high school STM. All the participants described their STM settings as challenging. For many participants, the physical settings of the STM experience were challenging. Several participants described being disoriented by meeting people from different race, ethnic, and socio-economic backgrounds. Most reflected that their domestic STM experience was different from their international STM experience. Several

shared that their domestic STM experience provided an "appropriate" challenge; international STM experiences, however, created too much challenge to process.

In describing the transformational elements of their domestic high school STM, all the participants said their perspectives were challenged. The first area where their perspectives were challenged was their "black and white" thinking. Participants described a naïve perspective where right and wrong were clearly defined and where cause and effect were simple and predictable.

A second area where most of the participants were challenged was their prejudices and biases. Most of the participants did not change their initial perspectives on race and culture during the STM, but they did describe the STM experience as part of a trajectory towards that change. The STM got them out of their "bubble" and began the process of "chipping away" at their assumptions on race and culture. For some, the STM experience revealed their prejudice and was a life-long lesson in guarding themselves against pre-judging others.

Most of the participants reflected on powerful stories they heard and people they met. Some experiences were instrumental in breaking down prejudice against others of different racial, ethnic, and socio-economic backgrounds. They were deeply affected by seeing their STM hosts' life examples; eventually many of the participants would follow in their STM hosts' steps and move into at-risk neighborhoods. For several of the STM participants, their senior pastors played a significant role in validating their participation in the STM and in processing their experience.

Several of the participants were transformed by the skills that they learned or developed on their STM, primarily in leadership. For some participants, their domestic

STM was the first time they were given a position of leadership in the church. Several also reflected that pastoral skills they developed then they still use today.

Participants were asked what immediate applications they made after their domestic STM. Several began Bible studies in their public schools. The participants shared that these were significant initiatives; fellow students became Christians and were baptized. Others began working with or leading ministries with immigrants and refugees. Many participants joined ministries that mirrored what they had done on their STM: tutoring, evangelism, and working with seniors.

All of the participants shared that they increased their participation in their church after they returned from their STM. Some of this participation was significant enough that participants had to sacrifice other activities so they could participate with their church more intensively.

Lastly, the church leaders were asked how they meet local community needs now. All the participants engage in many ways, individually and systemically. Some address system-wide community needs through the area of community development.

Participants also engage in local community needs through their families. Several are involved in foster care and adoption. Most talked about having neighbors over in their homes and engaging non-church neighbors on a regular basis.

All of the participants engage in local community needs by crossing cultural boundaries. STM is a primary vehicle used to expose and train their churches in crossing cultural boundaries. Participants view STM as "formative" for their congregation members' development. While most of the participants send congregants on STM, some

host STM. Those who host STM also view it as a significant tool to expose and train people in crossing cultural boundaries.

Several participants also shared that their outreach to immigrants and refugees is another way to expose and train churches in crossing cultural boundaries. Participants walk with immigrants and refugees and lead ministries to train others to walk with them.

A final way that most participants are meeting local community needs is by moving into poor neighborhoods. Participants share that their proximity offers them ample opportunities to meet needs. Several made a direct connection to moving into a poor neighborhood with their domestic STM experience in high school.

In conclusion, church leaders reflected that their domestic high school STM had significant immediate and long-lasting impact on their calling into their current church leadership roles and their perceptions of race and culture. They also noted significant impact on skills that they use in ministry. Church leaders reflect that they engage in meeting local community needs, and many do so in a systemic manner. Finally, church leaders who participated in domestic STM advocate for STM because they see the value from their own experience in exposing and training in crossing cultural boundaries.

Chapter Five

Discussion and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to examine how church leaders who participated in a domestic short-term mission (STM) during high school engage local community needs years later. In chapter two, the literature review shed insight on STM in Nehemiah chapters 3 and 5, on learning in adolescent STM, and on transformational learning in STM. In chapter four, the findings of seven interviews with experienced church leaders who had participated in a domestic STM trip in high school were presented.

The following research questions guided the research.

1. How do church leaders describe the impact of their high school STM had in their choice to be a church leader?

2. How do church leaders describe the transformational elements of their high school STM experience?

3. How do church leaders describe their engagement with local community needs immediately after the STM experience?

4. How do church leaders engage local community needs now?

Summary of the Study and Findings

This study reviewed relevant literature in three areas and analyzed interview data from seven church leaders who had participated in a domestic STM in high school.

STM Has a Biblical Underpinning

The literature review has shown that STM has a biblical underpinning; STM is evidenced in Nehemiah 3 and 5. Work teams from as far away as thirty-five kilometers came and stayed in Jerusalem while working on the walls. The author of Nehemiah affirms that people from various backgrounds and surrounding towns worked together to finish the rebuilding of the walls. This dramatic, significant, collaborative, STM-based effort testified to the Jewish people and the surrounding nations that Jerusalem was the dwelling place of God. Nehemiah 5 shows that the impact of the collaborative, STM-based, wall building led to transformative change for individuals and to systemic change in Jewish society surrounding the treatment of the poor.

The Transformative Nature of Adolescent Domestic STM

Looking several millennia forward to the church today, STM is a foundational element of adolescent experience in the church in the USA. Roughly 28 percent of all adolescents, church going or not, have participated in STM. The percentage of individuals participating in STM has been growing for decades. That growth came as missiologists and church leaders debated the validity of STM in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. Youth pastors have come to see STM as an integral part of youth ministry; thus, adolescent STM is here to stay, playing a significant role in the modern church.

Research has shown that adolescent domestic STM has a positive impact on religious participation, volunteerism, and civic engagement. Adolescent participation in international STM, however, does not make a significant long-term difference in volunteering. A significant question from this research is: Why do domestic STM trips have significantly more impact on adolescents than international STM trips?

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Current STM research reveals that the best practices of service learning (SL) should be adapted to STM. First, guided reflection before, during, and after learning experiences help students learn more deeply. Second, perspective taking helps students understand different viewpoints. These best practices foster worldview transformation, or transformational learning, during SL.

In addition to SL, global learning objectives (GLO) have much to offer STM. The criteria developed to evaluate if an educational opportunity is fostering cultural sensitivity is a helpful tool in the STM toolkit. However, researchers, missiologists, and anthropologists studying STM have not found GLO used regularly in planning and evaluating STM. The tools to use GLO are available, but they are being left in the toolbox. A key question here is: What is inhibiting the use of GLO in STM?

Many observers ask if STM can be transformational for adolescents. Adolescent neurobiological development study has shown that adolescents can process at a cognitive level leading to transformational change. They can integrate multiple experiences, think on a level outside of their immediate physical needs, and grapple with opposing viewpoints. However, for adolescents to make a transformational change, they have to have sufficient psychological well-being. A question not being asked by STM research is: To what degree does psychological well-being impact STM learning?

Transformational learning (TL) has been observed in service learning (SL). Primarily, TL is expressed in intercultural competency and global citizenship. At the same time, some participants in SL become entrenched in their current views rather than becoming transformed. Research has shown that facilitated critical reflection is a key

indicator of whether participants in SL have a transformative experience or not. Critical reflection facilitates TL in SL.

Impact of Adolescent Domestic STM on Church Leaders

The interviews revealed the areas that transformational learning in domestic high school STM impacts church leaders as adults. The participants shared that their experience during their STM had a significant impact on their decision to pursue full-time ministry. They described a direct, specific calling from God to Christian ministry during their high school STM. Those who did not receive a direct calling described the STM as part of the trajectory of their calling to Christian ministry.

In addition, they stated that their domestic high school STM affirmed their leadership gifting. This affirmation came when given significant leadership roles before, during, and after their STM experience. For some, it was the first time they had been given leadership responsibilities in the church.

Church leaders were asked to describe transformational elements of their domestic high school STM. All described their STM settings as challenging. They described being disoriented by meeting people from different racial, ethnic, and socio-economic backgrounds. Most also noted that their domestic STM experience was different from their international STM experience, saying that their domestic STM experience provided an "appropriate" challenge, while international STM experiences provided too much challenge to process the experience.

In describing the transformational elements of their domestic high school STM, the participants also said that their perspectives were challenged. The first area where their perspectives were challenged was their "black and white" thinking. Participants

described this perspective as one where right and wrong are clearly defined; what people put into something is what they get out of it. Participants said they were challenged to think outside of the neat lines of "black and white" thinking.

A second challenge was the confronting of their biases. Most did not change their initial perspectives on race and culture during the STM, but they did describe the STM experience as part of a trajectory in getting out of their "bubble." It was a beginning of a "chipping away" at their perspectives on race and culture. The STM experience revealed prejudice and was a life-long lesson in guarding themselves from pre-judging others.

Many reflected on powerful stories they heard on their STM experience as well as the influential people they met. Some reflected that the stories and people were instrumental in breaking down prejudice against others of different racial, ethnic, and socio-economic backgrounds. They said they were deeply impacted by seeing their STM hosts' life examples; eventually several of the participants would follow in their STM hosts' steps and move into an at-risk neighborhood. Several senior pastors also played a significant role in validating participation in the STM and processing that experience.

The participants grew significantly in skills that they learned or developed on their STM as well. Primarily, these skills involved leadership. For some, their domestic STM was the first time they were given a position of leadership in the church. Several also reflected that pastoral skills they developed on their high school STM they still use today in church leadership.

Participants were asked what immediate applications they made after their domestic STM. Several began Bible studies in their public school after returning from

their STM. The participants shared that these were significant initiatives; fellow students attended these Bible studies, became Christians, and were baptized.

Participants also returned from their high school STM and applied what they had learned in their neighborhoods. Some began working with or leading ministries with immigrants and refugees. Others joined ministries that mimicked what they had participated on their STM: tutoring, evangelism, and working with seniors.

Participants also increased their church involvement after they returned from their STM. Some of this involvement required the sacrifice of other activities so they could participate with their church more intensively.

Lastly, the church leaders were asked how they meet local community needs now. All the participants engage local community needs. First, they engage by meeting physical needs, both individually and systemically. Some of the participants are involved in churches and ministries that address system-wide community needs through the area of community development.

Participants also engage in local community needs through their families. Several are involved in foster care and adoption. Most talked about having neighbors over in their homes and engaging non-church-going neighbors on a regular basis.

All of the participants are crossing cultural boundaries. STM is a tool participants are using expose and train their churches in crossing cultural boundaries. They view STM as "formative" for their congregation members' development by crossing cultural boundaries. While most of the participants send their congregants on STM, some host STM. Those who host STM also view it as a tool to expose and train people in crossing cultural boundaries.

Several participants shared that their outreach to immigrants and refugees is also a significant way to expose and train their churches in crossing cultural boundaries. Participants personally walk with immigrants and refugees and lead ministries to train others to walk with immigrants and refugees.

A final way that participants are meeting local community needs now is by moving into poor neighborhoods. Participants said that moving into poor neighborhoods gives them proximity and ample opportunities to meet local needs. Several connected this decision to their domestic STM experience in high school.

In conclusion, church leaders reflected that their domestic high school STM had significant, immediate, and long-lasting impact on their calling into their current church leadership roles and their perceptions of race and culture. They also see a significant impact of their STM experience on skills that they currently use in ministry. Church leaders engage in meeting local community needs, and many do so in a systemic manner. Finally, church leaders who participated in domestic STM advocate for STM in their context because they see the value from their own experience in exposing and training in crossing cultural boundaries.

Discussion of Findings

In this section, the literature and interview research identify how adolescent domestic STM impacts future church leaders. Three primary areas are discussed in this section: the transformative nature of adolescent domestic STM; long-term impact of adolescent domestic STM; and adolescent domestic STM and bias.

The Transformative Nature of Adolescent Domestic STM

Recent research and this study's interviews show that adolescent domestic STM is transformative on both individual and systemic levels. Looking at Nehemiah chapters 3 and 5, we found that wall-building STM teams from towns surrounding Jerusalem were rebuilding the city walls, which led to worldview transformation. After the walls were rebuilt, the people shifted from committing injustice against the poor to pursuing justice for the poor. This change occurred on an individual and structural level.

Individual Transformation

Recent neurobiological research on adolescents and participant interviews showed that transformational learning is possible for adolescents on STM. Neurobiological research shows that adolescent brain development, specifically the pruning of synapses to allow for efficiency and the developing of neuron connections between the frontal cortex and amygdala, allows adolescents to think beyond their physical needs. Adolescent brain development allows them to evaluate and integrate different perspectives in a critical fashion.

This type of evaluation and integration happened in the church leaders interviewed for this study. Participants reflected that they identified different worldviews and were actively processing and challenging those differing worldviews during and after their experience. While there has been a question as to whether transformative learning is possible for adolescents participating on STM, recent research in neurobiological brain development and in this study show that it is not only possible but should be expected and supported by educational planning.

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At the same time, research also shows that adolescent neurobiological development requires psychological well-being to foster transformative change. The healthier an adolescent is psychologically, the more deeply they are able to change and learn. This study did not address the psychological well-being of the church leaders when they were adolescents. It could be assumed that the participants had sufficient psychological well-being because they experienced transformational change, but this assumption would have to be studied and proven before that conclusion was validated.

The individual transformation of church leaders who went on domestic STM was aided by the best practices of service learning (SL). SL's four components -- active learning, learning in a different context, reflection, and analysis -- all aid transformative learning in adolescent STM. The church leaders in this study experienced all the SL components in their STM experience except for one. The exception proves another key point. The one church leader who was not actively led in analysis and reflection noted that the STM reinforced cultural bias and perception of superiority. However, the hosts of the STM did not have the same bias, which caused internal struggle "for years" to rectify this "cognitive dissonance." STM that utilizes SL components breaks down bias to facilitate transformational learning.

Structural Transformation

In Nehemiah 5, we see structural transformation after STM wall building. Why? City walls in Ancient Near East writings represented the deity and worldview of the city; as go the walls, so goes the worldview of the city and people. This worldview transformation led to structural transformation, as Nehemiah transformed the role of governor from one of oppressor to public servant. While previous governors used their

position to oppress the people under their reign, Nehemiah transformed the role to initiate structural change that freed slaves, returned and lowered interest rates on loans, and returned land to original owners. This structural transformation was facilitated by worldview change from STM.

In the same way, some church leaders have led structural change as a result of their adolescent STM experience. Some modeled their current Christian development ministry on the examples and ideas they saw during their domestic adolescent STM. One church leader moved into an at-risk, urban context and has initiated building a school, starting a health care center, and has created a housing ministry that rehabs houses while training neighbors in construction trades. This ministry has created structural change in that neighborhood.

Several of the church leaders also remembered that they began Bible studies in their public schools after returning from their domestic adolescent STM, another transformational initiative. These Bible studies were significant in that individuals became Christians and were baptized. Further, in one case several hundred students began attending the Bible study. More study is needed to see if these significant Bible studies led to structural change in the schools where the church leaders started them. In addition, more study is needed to evaluate structural change related to STM outcomes.

Long-Term Impact of Adolescent Domestic STM on Church Leaders

Does the investment in adolescent STM bear long-term results on the formation of church leaders? This research found that church leaders who went on domestic STM as adolescents were significantly impacted by their experience in two ways: their calling into ministry and their exposure and development of leadership gifting.

Calling to Ministry

All of the church leaders who were interviewed said their adolescent domestic STM had an impact on their calling to ministry in the church. They understood a direct call from God during the STM, attributing the STM as one step in the process of their calling. STM research has not focused on STM as a vehicle for calling participants into church leadership. One study confirmed that the majority of seminary students have participated in STM, but it did not assess what factor the STM was in their decision to attend seminary.

Leadership Development

While recent transformational learning and service learning research focuses primarily on perspective change, it has not focused on leadership development. In a similar way, STM participant research has been focused on personal change in terms of volunteering or giving. However, little attention is given to leadership development. I found that STM had a significant impact on uncovering and developing leadership skills in the church leaders who were interviewed. They said their domestic adolescent STM was the first time they learned they had leadership skills, and that they practiced leadership skills in ways that encouraged them to continue using those gifts. Transformational learning theory emphasizes the necessity of trying on a new role in the transformational process; adolescent domestic STM provides this component.

Impact of Adolescent Domestic STM on Bias on Church Leaders

A significant question that revolves around STM is: Does adolescent STM reinforce bias? Research indicates that STM does reinforce bias of participants. However,

I found that adolescent STM instead breaks down bias of future church leaders. Church leaders reflected that their domestic adolescent STM began the process of breaking down their "black and white" way of thinking. Church leaders described "black and white" thinking as a way of thinking about life in dualistic cause and effect manner; if people work hard, they will succeed; if they are good, they will be rewarded. Church leaders said this "black and white" thinking was eroded during their STM experience.

In addition to a breakdown of "black and white" thinking, church leaders reflected that their bias in terms of race and culture also began to be "chipped away." While church leaders described their bias in terms of race and culture as "resilient," they said their adolescent STM was one of many steps that removed their bias. Church leaders reflected that their STM experience exposed their prejudice, sense of superiority, and the prejudice of their family.

One church leader expressed that adolescent domestic STM reinforced the sense of superiority and prejudice over those they served. However, this same church leader said that the compassionate and humble example of the leaders hosting the STM challenged any perception of superiority and prejudice. The challenge was so intense that the church leader wrestled with the "cognitive dissonance" for years until accepting that such a perspective is prejudicial.

The primary vehicle that broke down bias of church leaders was reflecting on the lives and stories of STM adult hosts. While participating on domestic STM, church leaders said they reflected on the stories and life examples of the STM hosts. STM and service learning research has concluded that reflection and analysis are necessary to bring about transformational change. I saw this best practice born out in church leaders who

participated in adolescent STM. Reflection and analysis on their experience with adult

hosts was necessary to bring about transformational change. It is important to note here

that participants years later reflected on the stories and examples of adults, not children,

as the most impactful. Whereas a common focus of many STM trips is around working

with children, participants remembered the stories and interaction with adults as

transformational.

"Getting Your Feet Wet Without Drowning;" The Advantage of Domestic Versus International STM for Adolescents

Recent research concludes that adolescent domestic STM has significant, long-

term transformational impact while international STM does not. Adolescents who go on

domestic STM are significantly more likely to volunteer locally and volunteer for

international causes as adults. Adolescent participation in international STM does not

make a difference in volunteer action in local or international causes as adults. Church

leaders who were interviewed reinforced this conclusion. Without being prompted, many

shared that their adolescent domestic STM was more influential than their experience on

international STM. Why? The overwhelming disorientation of international STM did not

allow participants to process their experience while their adolescent domestic STM

experience was "like getting your feet wet without drowning."

Can Adolescent Domestic STM Challenge Bias?

Both research and church leader interviews reveal that challenges during STM

spur transformation. Research in adolescent transformational learning (TL) shows that

adolescent TL occurs after they experience a disorienting event or idea. Adolescents test

the new experience or idea and reflect on it. After reflecting on that experience or idea, they are transformed when a new worldview takes root and evaluates their surroundings differently.

Church leaders shared that their challenging STM experiences sparked transformation in areas of bias. The majority of the participants shared that their bias around race and culture was challenged on their adolescent domestic STM. The challenging settings of the STM experience took participants out of their "bubble." For most of the church leaders, the primary challenge to their bias during the STM was the stories and life examples of STM hosts. The challenge to bias was instigated by the STM experience, and church leaders shared that it was the reflection on that experience, over a period of many years, that led to breaking down their bias. It was not the STM that broke down the bias but the reflection on that experience that broke down their bias.

Recommendations for Practice

In light of the findings described above the church is well advised to continue to use STM and view it as a significant investment in encouraging future church leaders. Second, adolescent STM should be focused on domestic locations, not international sites. Third, STM should utilize service learning's best practices of reflection and analysis to facilitate transformational learning. This reflection and analysis should be led by adults and should reflect on the lives and stories of STM adult hosts. Fourth, STM practice needs to be informed by global learning objectives to prevent paternalism and reinforce perspective taking and systemic analysis.

Domestic adolescent STM is an effective tool for encouraging and training future church leaders. STM is an opportunity for potential church leaders to assess their calling

into ministry in the context of adult mentors and pastors who can provide healthy counsel. STM provides a structured opportunity for adolescents to practice and examine leadership gifts.

Adolescent STM should be focused on domestic locations. International STM does not provide long-term benefit to adolescent participants because they are unable to process all of the dramatic differences in context. Domestic STM provides a better context of evaluating differences of setting and culture. As one participant remarked, domestic STM is like "getting your feet wet without drowning."

Adolescent domestic STM should utilize the service learning model's best practices of reflection and analysis. Combined with reflection and analysis, adolescent STM can foster significant, long-lasting transformational learning for participants. Adolescent STM can begin the process of breaking down bias in participants.

Adolescent STM should begin using global learning objectives (GLOs) in planning, operating, and evaluation. GLOs would aid adolescent STM by fostering perspective taking and combat reinforcing bias. A significant critique of STM is that it reinforces paternalistic and prejudicial perspectives. Hosts and youth pastors should incorporate GLOs as they work on curriculum, invite trainers, and evaluate how STM practice can combat bias.

Recommendations for Further Research

There are several areas needing continued research. One conclusion from the literature review and the participant interviews is that domestic adolescent STM has long-term impact on participants, but international adolescent STM does not. Why do domestic STM trips have significantly more impact on adolescents than international STM trips?

What factors make domestic adolescent STM more amenable to transformational learning than international adolescent STM? If an adolescent participated in domestic STM before an international STM, how would that domestic experience influence their international experience?

Church leaders reflected that their domestic adolescent STM facilitated breaking down bias. Is this true for non-church leaders who participated in domestic adolescent STM? Further study is necessary to understand the impact of adolescent STM on bias.

Global learning objectives (GLO) are helpful tools to plan and evaluate STM. However, the literature review found little emphasis or evidence of GLOs being used in STM. What is inhibiting the use of GLO in STM?

A significant number of the participants shared their adolescent domestic STM was key to their ministry calling. The findings of this study would be aided by a larger sample to verify if adolescent STM is a helpful vehicle of calling church leaders and the nature of that calling.

Service learning (SL) fosters transformational learning through guided reflection and analysis. Without reflection and analysis, SL can reinforce bias in students. SL reflection and analysis have been found to aid transformational learning in STM. How is STM utilizing SL practices of reflection and analysis? Is there anything in STM that prevents reflection and analysis? For adolescent STM, are there specific elements of reflection and analysis that should be emphasized when compared to adult STM?

STM facilitates transformational learning that, at times, leads to systemic change. The literature review did not reveal any research in the area of STM and systemic change

beyond that evidenced in Nehemiah 5. It would be helpful to study the possibility of STM

fostering systemic change in the participants' churches and communities.

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