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STRENGTHENING THE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE CHURCH AND PARACHURCH IN THE CALLING AND CARE OF CRU'S INTERNATIONAL INTERNS

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STRENGTHENING THE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE
CHURCH AND PARACHURCH IN THE CALLING AND
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To my wife, whose love and encouragement have carried me through,

and to my children, who have endured life with a distracted father,

may you be blessed for your patience and kindness.

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NIDNTTTE	Silva, Moisés. *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis*. 2nd ed. 5 vols. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014
PNTC	Pillar New Testament Commentary
PWCM	Winter, Ralph D., and Steven C. Hawthorne. *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*. 4th ed. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2009. Kindle

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PREFACE

In June 2000, a month after I graduated college, I boarded a plane headed for Slovakia. I spent the next fifteen months ministering to college students in that tiny Central European country. That experience launched me on a trajectory of full-time campus ministry with Cru. After my return, I landed in Bowling Green, Kentucky, to serve with Cru at Western Kentucky University. I met my wife, moved back overseas, returned to the States, grew a family, and completed a master's degree, all while making lasting friendships. In those formative years of ministry, I learned who I was and who I was not through the faithful mentorship of Thomas Weakley and other men the Lord put in my life. I learned how to persevere and when to acknowledge my limits.

After fourteen years in Bowling Green, we moved to North Carolina so I could start a new chapter with Cru working in international sending. Because of my experience after college, I believe in the efficacy and worth of sending recent graduates to live overseas for a year to do ministry. My life is a testimony to how the Lord can use that time to sanctify interns.

This thesis is the product of all those experiences—the joyful, the trying, the exciting, and the overwhelming. Without those, I would not be who I am at this moment.

It is also the fruit of a life nurtured in the faith—parents and grandparents who faithfully pointed my brother and me toward Christ. Without my lovely wife, who is gracious in her heart and generous with her time, I would not have made it.

Finally, I would like to thank my supervisor, Matt Haste, and my editor, Jenn Stec. I have known Matt for several years. His friendship and guidance through the writing process pushed me to continue when I felt discouraged. Jenn's expertise and patience have been invaluable through numerous edits.

My hope is that the work presented here will honor the Lord and bless his church.

Ben McGuire

Angier, North Carolina

December 2023

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Scripture utilizes multiple images to describe the relationship between Christ and the church. One of the most prominent is that of a shepherd with his sheep. Kent Hughes says this "beautiful Scriptural image of the Good Shepherd and his sheep is a picture of deepest intimacy."[1] In chapter 10 of his Gospel, John illuminates the shepherd imagery by recounting Jesus's description of himself. Jesus is not a hired hand; he is, as D. A. Carson notes, the good shepherd who "does not merely risk his life, he lays it down" for his sheep, who "by his death . . . draws them to himself."[2] After his ascension, Christ provides for his sheep by giving the church under-shepherds in his absence. Peter gives special attention to the role of these under-shepherds in chapter 5 of his first letter. They are to imitate Christ by leading their flock with the same care and sacrifice as their Chief Shepherd—willingly, eagerly, and as examples out of a spirit of humility (1 Pet 5:1–5).

The role of an under-shepherd is indisputably important in the life of the flock. Pastors and elders carry the weight of leadership and authority as Christ's representative caretakers and are Christ's good gift to the church. What happens, though, when more than one person, organization, or entity seeks to fulfill this role? With the advent of parachurch ministries that extend beyond the influence of the local church, the potential for confusion and conflict increases.

While general cooperation exists between churches and parachurch ministries,

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[1] R. Kent Hughes, *John: That You May Believe*, ESV ed., Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), 275.

[2] D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 386.

the lines of distinction between the two are easily blurred. Cru (formerly Campus Crusade for the Christ in the US) stands as an example of this tension. Cru staff members are expected to be church members and are encouraged to partner well with local churches. Yet, Cru missionaries also perform many of the functions traditionally held by the local church—evangelism, discipleship, prayer meetings, fellowship, domestic and international missions, and sometimes the ordinances—outside the context and direct authority of their local church leadership. Even though students involved with Cru are encouraged to be connected to a local church, they often look more to Cru staff than their church for insight, leadership, and care. This can result in confusion or frustration between local Cru movements and local pastors.

Cru also serves as a sending agency, and this conflict can impact their hiring process as well. For the past two decades, Cru has hired, on average, roughly five hundred interns and full-time staff members each year. Most of those work in Cru's campus ministry.[3] The decision to serve in full-time ministry for any amount of time should come with much counsel from those who know that applicant best. Often, though, hiring these laborers comes with little input and cooperation from the applicant's local or "home" church. Whose responsibility is it to know these applicants best? Does it lie primarily with the sending agency, the sending church, or both?

Issues surrounding the role of a local church are further complicated in the lives of Cru interns serving internationally. Their US counterparts, both interns and full-time staff, typically connect quickly to a church body. Even their teammates overseas who are full-time international staff can be more fully engaged in the life of a local church as members because they tend to be much more acclimated to the culture and the language. International interns, however, sit in a unique position due to their relatively short time overseas and the fact that they often do not acquire the local language as fully

[3] This information was taken directly from one of Cru's internal employee databases.

in that timeframe.[4] Therefore, their involvement in a local church while overseas is often minimal in non-English speaking countries, especially if there are no English-speaking services available. At the same time, their sending churches often maintain little involvement and connection with their members while they are on assignment. These factors highlight the need for a more robust partnership between Cru and local churches in the calling and care of Cru missionaries, especially international interns.

Familiarity with the Literature

Conversations about the church and parachurch are nothing new in America. During the revivals of the eighteenth century, for example, the role and legitimacy of itinerant preachers, who were unattached to a specific church and worked across denominational lines, was hotly contested. The ministries of men like George Whitefield (1714–1770) and James Davenport (1716–1757) stirred up the controversy, and opinions ranged from full support to abject disapproval. On one hand, pastors feared itinerant preachers would split churches and encourage members to abandon their pastors.[5] On the other hand, numerous conversions resulted from their ministries, churches increased, and pastors and missionaries were trained and sent out, drastically altering the landscape of American Christianity. Similar questions and concerns exist today. What is the function of parachurch organizations? How do they fit into God's design for gospel ministry? How should their members and staff interact with and participate in local churches? In what ways can churches and parachurches partner together? Answers to those questions extend

[4] Cru's international interns initially make a one-year commitment, with the option of continuing for a second year. Though language learning is part of their assignment, it usually only encompasses five to ten hours per week, with some locations requiring more. Interns spend most of their time in direct ministry with English-speakers due to the abbreviated length of their ministry.

[5] Thomas S. Kidd, *The Great Awakening: The Roots of Evangelical Christianity in Colonial America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), 116, 137.

across a spectrum. However, they can be grouped into two broad categories: "separate and necessary" and "helpful but subordinate."[6]

Separate and Necessary

One of the most notable voices in this discussion is missionary and missiologist Ralph Winter. At the All-Asia Mission Consultation in 1973, he presented a vision for the church by defining and describing what he called the "Two Structures" approach. He named them "modalities," what is typically called the local church, and "sodalities," missionary organizations that exist apart from the local church governance. Though a modality offers membership, a sodality requires "an adult second decision beyond modality membership and is limited by either age or sex or marital status."[7]

Winter argued that these two structures have been present from the earliest days of the New Testament church and even precede the ministry of Christ. According to Winter, Paul's ministry, though launched by the church in Antioch, functioned self-sufficiently, both economically and directionally. Winter took this to mean that "Paul's team may certainly be considered a structure."[8] He based his argument mainly on the fact that Scripture does not provide clarity. Because Scripture gives no clear guidance, he assumed the writers presupposed the existence of this two-structure pattern. While Catholics maintained sodalities through orders, this model was lost for Protestants during the Reformation. It would not be until William Carey and the re-establishment of modern mission societies that Protestants would recover sodalities on a large scale. Parachurch organizations have exploded since the nineteenth century, but Winter asserts that "among

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[6] Some still deny the legitimacy of parachurch organizations and believe that gospel ministry has been ordained to the local church alone. However, the scope and purpose of this paper is not mainly to argue the legitimacy of parachurch ministries. Therefore, the views considered here are limited to those who see a viable role for parachurch groups but question the extent of it.

[7] Ralph Winter, "The Two Structures of God's Redemptive Mission," in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*, ed. Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne, 4th ed. (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2009), chap. 39, sec. 2, para. 10, Kindle.

[8] Winter, "The Two Structures," sec. 1, para. 4.

Protestants, there continues to be deep confusion about the legitimacy and proper relationship of the two structures."[9]

A decade after Winter proposed the Two Structures model, Jerry White, a pastor and former executive director of the Navigators, concluded that no consensus existed on the role or legitimacy of parachurch organizations,[10] fueling conflict and competition around resources (people and money), theology, and authority. Historically, White, like Winter, saw evidence for what he called "para-local church" groups in the New Testament.[11] This line can be traced in some form into the modern era through avenues like Protestant missionary societies and Sunday School programs. Present-day groups, White explained, have multiplied in the fertile soil of twentieth-century mass evangelism campaigns and the birth of more specialized efforts. White believed "the para-local church finds its theological legitimacy in the freedom of form given in the New Testament, in the necessary expression of each believer-priest in his ministry, and in the examples of local and mobile functions of the universal church."[12] In other words, local churches meet broad needs, and para-local churches meet specialized needs. Having established this, White then addressed the strengths and weaknesses of the relationship and offered a direction forward in cooperation.

More recently, Sam Metcalf has adapted and expanded Winter's original thesis about the Two Structures. His argument maintains a distinction between modalities and sodalities by providing the defining characteristics and purposes of both. Metcalf believes that parachurch ministries are a legitimate part of the Christian movement, and he draws that argument to its logical conclusion. Parachurch ministries are not only legitimate, but

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[9] Winter, "The Two Structures," sec. 4, para. 5.

[10] Jerry White, *The Church and the Parachurch: An Uneasy Marriage*, Critical Concern Book Series (Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1983).

[11] White, *The Church and the Parachurch*, 19.

[12] White, *The Church and the Parachurch*, 85.

they are also necessary. As a result, it would be an error to "assume that the local church is all there is or should be when it comes to God's redemptive purposes."[13] Like Winter, Metcalf sees the seeds of parachurch ministries in the religious structures present before Christ's ministry, with Paul's missionary band standing as the most obvious New Testament example of an autonomous group. For pastors today, Metcalf asserts, it is inexperience and a deficient ecclesiology that prevent them from seeing the validity of sodalities. It is through sodalities that those with apostolic, pastoral, and evangelistic gifts will be set free to exercise those gifts. Because they are made up of "second decision people . . . who make an additional vocational commitment to a specialized ministry," sodalities can exercise authority, allocate people and resources, and sustain themselves longer than modalities.[14] In Metcalf's estimation, this freedom affords sodalities the flexibility to streamline and specialize in ways modalities never could. Yet, they are still only one side of the coin. The local church is a necessary partner.

Helpful but Subordinate

In 1974, about a year after Ralph Winter first delivered his presentation, "The Two Structures of God's Redemptive Plan," the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization met for their first international conference on evangelism. In the years following the inaugural conference, the congress continued to produce documents, the *Lausanne Occasional Papers*. One of those papers, "Cooperating in World Evangelization: A Handbook on Church/Para-church Relationships," sought to address the evident tension between churches and parachurch groups.[15] In the theological

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[13] Sam Metcalf, *Beyond the Local Church: How Apostolic Movements Can Change the World* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2015), 14.

[14] Metcalf, *Beyond the Local Church*, 121.

[15] Lausanne Commission on Cooperation, "Cooperating in World Evangelization: A Handbook on Church/Para-church Relationships," *Lausanne Occasional Paper* 24, March 1, 1983, https://lausanne.org/content/lop/lop-24.

preamble to that document, John Stott offered a grading scale for parachurch organizations: "Independence of the church is bad, co-operation with the church is better, service as an arm of the church is best."[16] Such terms create an obvious hierarchy while maintaining the usefulness of parachurch groups. Tim Keller expresses a similar sentiment when he sets the local church apart as the "irreplaceable agent for this ministry in the world,"[17] though he acknowledges the efficacy of parachurch ministry work.

From a contemporary perspective, the 9Marks organization stands as one of the most prolific sources of resources for applying a biblical ecclesiology in the local church. In his book *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*, Mark Dever lays the groundwork for establishing and maintaining the purity and integrity of the local church for modern readers. Dever's goal is "to recover what the church is to be."[18] His focus, therefore, is limited, but his perspective is clear. The church holds a place of primacy in Christian ministry and mission. Since the church carries the responsibility of authority and direction, any other organization will be subordinate.

One of the key tenets of 9Marks is meaningful church membership. What is it? Who can be called a member? What is he joining? Why does it matter? To understand these tenets is to understand the church, and to understand the church is to understand membership. In his book *Church Membership*, Jonathan Leeman defines a believer's expectations of and responsibility to his or her local church and the church's responsibility to believers. When considering the idea of church membership, Leeman observes that it is often seen as "a voluntary organization where membership is optional"

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[16] Lausanne Commission on Cooperation, "Cooperating in World Evangelism," §1: Theological Preamble.

[17] Timothy Keller, *Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 294.

[18] Mark Dever, *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*, 3rd ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 25.

or "a friendly group of people who share an interest in religious things."[19] However, Leeman counters, a local church is made up of "the people of a kingdom or nation."[20] As such, they are under the authority of Christ as their king and act as his ambassadorial representatives. The local church is the physical expression of this rule. It is the place "where Christians 'go public' to declare our highest allegiance" and "where our king enacts his rule through preaching, the ordinances, and discipline."[21] From this perspective, the local church is "the institution that Jesus created and authorized to pronounce the gospel of the kingdom, to affirm gospel professors, to oversee their discipleship, and to expose imposters."[22]

Writing with a narrow focus on global missions, Andy Johnson explores this idea in terms of the church's mission. He establishes clear boundaries as to the main agent in advancing the kingdom in *Missions: How the Local Church Goes Global*. God not only sets the parameters of his mission, but he also selects the players. Johnson argues that since Christ's commission to his followers in Matthew 28:18–20 launched them (us) on a course to build the church, it is primarily through the church that his plan will be accomplished. In fact, "Any humanly invented organizations that assist in missions must remember that they are the bridesmaids, not the bride."[23] This view has obvious implications for the role of parachurch groups and the nature of how they partner with local churches. Who can send? Who is sent? What is the mission? Johnson offers a single answer: churches send their members to establish and strengthen churches. This in turn carries implications for churches. They must be able and willing to raise up, equip,

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[19] Jonathan Leeman, *Church Membership: How the World Knows Who Represents Jesus*, 9Marks: Building Healthy Churches (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 22.

[20] Leeman, *Church Membership*, 24.

[21] Leeman, *Church Membership*, 63.

[22] Leeman, *Church Membership*, 64.

[23] Andy Johnson, *Missions: How the Local Church Goes Global*, 9Marks: Building Healthy Churches (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 27.

and support these missionaries and "never abdicate that role to parachurch organizations."[24] When and if partnership with sending agencies does occur, Johnson believes the sending church still bears the weight of ensuring the overall well-being of the missionary by staying involved in his or her life.

Cru's Position

As a religious missionary order, Cru has a statement of faith that explains its position on the key tenets of the Christian faith.[25] The seventeen points of the document cover "those areas of doctrinal teaching on which, historically, there has been general agreement among all true Christians."[26] However, due to its interdenominational status, Cru does not take an official stance on doctrinal issues that fall within the persuasion level of belief.[27] Examples include which mode of baptism should be practiced, the form of church government, and the role of women in the church among others.

Cru's position regarding the local church falls within the persuasion category. The statement of faith declares, "Jesus Christ is the Head of the church, His body, which is composed of all people, living and dead, who have been joined to him through saving faith."[28] There is no official stance on the local expression of the church. Staff are expected to be involved with a church whose beliefs align with Cru's statement of faith. However, Cru staff members have the freedom to interpret what involvement means, as well as the expectations and requirements for membership in a local church. As with any

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[24] Johnson, *Missions*, 44.

[25] Cru, "Statement of Faith," accessed October 18, 2021, https://www.cru.org/us/en/about/statement-of-faith.html. See also appendix 1.

[26] Cru, "Statement of Faith."

[27] Within Cru it is common to place beliefs in three categories: conviction, persuasion, or opinion. For a brief explanation, see Scott Crocker, "The Differences between Convictions, Persuasions, and Opinions," Cru Partnerships, last modified July 1, 2017, https://www.cru.org/us/en/about/partners/the-differences-between-convictions-persuasions-and-opinions.html.

[28] Cru, "Statement of Faith."

other persuasion-level matter, interpretations of this statement cover the spectrum within Cru.[29]

Though Cru's international interns fall under these same organizational requirements, expectations for them are more loosely defined. Internal documents used to train interns before they report to their international assignment simply encourage attendance. These documents omit any qualifying words like connection, participation, or partnership with local churches while on the field.

Void in the Literature

Discussions on this topic typically stay at the organizational level and center on the legitimacy of parachurch ministries. Only rarely do they touch on how individual sodality staff members relate to the local churches they attend. When writers from both sides of the issue do engage the question, specific direction is sparse.

Since sodalities are made up of second-decision people, Metcalf argues that they are imbued with authority separate from that of a local church in terms of disciplining and assigning their staff. Metcalf does acknowledge there will be tension and offers an example, but unfortunately, he neither addresses the implications of his view nor critically engages with those on the other side of the argument.[30] Jerry White comes closest to offering insight into the relationship between an individual staff member with a sodality and her local church. In his view, the New Testament endows a local church with "authority in the area of personal life and discipline, not in ministry."[31] From a practical perspective, this idea carries some merit, but White does not develop it completely. Scripture does not divide between a believer's personal and professional life. If a

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[29] Anecdotally, I can report that I know staff who see Cru as the church and make no distinction between it and a local church. On the other hand, I know staff who hold a stronger view of church membership and participation. Personally, I fall into the latter category.

[30] Metcalf, *Beyond the Local Church*, 153–54.

[31] White, *The Church and Parachurch*, 82.

businessman or schoolteacher were asked to participate in questionable beliefs and practices as part of their job, church leaders would offer guidance or correction. Are those in ministry any less accountable?

The other side of the argument offers little more direct guidance. The 9Marks paradigm presupposes proximity in membership. That is certainly right and understandable, as that is the biblical ideal. What about those who cannot be proximate and cannot join a local community for legitimate reasons?[32] That is the exact position in which Cru's international interns most often find themselves. What guidance is there for them? In what ways can they healthily relate to their home/sending church?

Andy Johnson's work seeks to offer an image of a healthy sending church. However, he is hampered by a narrow (but not unbiblical) view of global missions. Based on 3 John and 1 Corinthians, he states that "not every cross-cultural gospel witness is a missionary."[33] Instead, he limits his definition to "someone identified and sent out by local churches to make the gospel known and to gather, serve, and strengthen local churches."[34] In fact these "missionaries are not just self-styled free agents. They should be accountable to a specific local church."[35] Johnson does not expand greatly on what this accountability looks like. In keeping with 3 John, he simply states that missionaries should report back concerning their ministry. His position raises several questions that

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[32] Those enlisted in the military and away on active duty would be the closest comparison, but Leeman does not address that directly. In his article for 9Marks, Bobby Jamieson acknowledges that there is "little direct biblical teaching on these issues, so we're deep in pragmatic waters." Bobby Jamieson, "Considering 7 Membership Exceptions," *9Marks Journal* (May 2019): 109–14. The article mentions military personnel, members out of the area, and supported workers. It allows for a person in one of these circumstances to maintain membership, yet it understandably offers little guidance by way of care. Two links within Jamieson's article that offer more on the subject point to Andy Johnson's book, *Missions*, and an interview with Johnson about the book. Another article by Caleb Greggsen provides a critique of those who live overseas and how they view church membership as an expatriate. It assumes the availability of an English-speaking local church. See Caleb Greggsen, "Church Membership in an International Church: Challenging Case Studies," *9Marks Journal* (May 2019): 63–68.

[33] Johnson, *Missions*, 35.

[34] Johnson, *Missions*, 36.

[35] Johnson, *Missions*, 39.

need clarification. What does it mean to identify and send missionaries? What about church members who work for parachurch agencies? What is the sending church's role in their lives? How can it partner well with the sending agency and remain actively involved in their care? Johnson's narrow definition fails to account for any nuance in a world flush with parachurch missionaries who need their church.

Thesis

Parachurch ministries like Cru play an important role in furthering God's kingdom, and they will continue to send missionaries. Therefore, the questions around partnership must be answered. While frustration, confusion, or disparity can and have hampered the church/parachurch relationship, most pastors and Cru staff want to know how to partner well. However, they receive little instruction. This thesis argues that gaps exist between sending churches and Cru in the calling and care of Cru's international interns that will only be bridged through stronger collaboration so that the two can partner well together for the kingdom. First, it examines the theological arguments and historical contexts around the church/parachurch dynamic. Second, it evaluates Cru's current philosophies and methods to assess the context from which Cru's international interns are sent. Third, it analyzes data from recent studies regarding how international interns relate to the local church and identifies the resultant implications. Lastly, it offers conclusions and recommendations for how both pastors and Cru can partner well. This will allow Cru to strengthen its partnerships with local churches by evaluating how to expand the role of the sending church in the initial calling and ongoing care of its short-term international missionaries. At the same time, it will help churches to grow in the ways they invest in college students before they are sent as short-term missionaries and to carry that same care through their time overseas.

Outline of Chapters

Chapter 2: The Theological and Historical Context for the Church/Parachurch Dynamic

At the time of their founding, parachurch groups felt compelled to fill a perceived need in kingdom-building work. Like its predecessors and contemporaries, Cru developed its structures and strategies within a specific context, in this case, mid-twentieth-century America. To understand that context, this chapter explores the relationship of parachurch ministries to the local church from both a theological and historical perspective, with a particular emphasis on the founding of student organizations like Cru. First, it considers the biblical teaching about sending missionaries from the church and explores the biblical foundations for parachurch organizations. Second, it examines the historical and cultural influences that motivated the formation of these groups.

Chapter 3: Examining Cru's Philosophy on Student Involvement and Sending

The philosophies and practices Cru utilizes on campus maintain an abiding influence in the lives of the college students who become interns. This chapter begins with a summary of the key influences surrounding Cru's formation. Next, it analyzes Cru's strategy of win, build, and send. Finally, it examines the evangelistic tactics Cru uses, how students and staff are equipped spiritually, and their relationship to the local church.

Chapter 4: An Examination of Recent Studies about the Local Church's Role in a Cru Intern's Life and Ministry

Historically, Cru has sought to partner well with churches in discipling students and has tried to maintain appropriate boundaries. At the same time, tensions

have remained with local church leaders throughout the organization's history. This raises questions regarding how well students get connected and involved in local churches. This chapter seeks to accomplish two primary goals. First, it examines data from two recent studies. Second, it identifies important implications from these studies that must be addressed regarding the calling and care of international interns who serve with Cru.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations for Establishing Healthy Partnerships between Cru and the Church

Healthy partnership requires appropriate expectations and clear communication. This chapter seeks to root the partnership between the church and parachurch within the soil of the local church by briefly summarizing a biblical view of church membership. Next, through a series of regression tests, this chapter points to key data that should be considered from the data presented in chapter 4. Finally, it maps out a potential path forward for Cru, students considering an international internship, and sending churches.

CHAPTER 2

THE THEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT FOR THE CHURCH/PARACHURCH DYNAMIC

Parachurch organizations are not a recent phenomenon, nor are the tensions in their relationships with local churches. The controversy surrounding this topic has occupied the attention of believers for centuries, cropping up at various times and in various places with varying degrees of intensity as the culture has shifted. Discussion of this matter often results in confusion and division. Even so, this remains an important subject because it delves into the nature of the church, asking questions like, "What is the church?" and "What is the church called to do?" By implication, it also addresses how believers should relate to the church. It surfaces arguments about membership, the sacraments, spiritual authority, and church discipline. These are not insignificant questions. Yet to assume they are not taken seriously by those involved on either side of the discussion would be naïve.

At the time of their founding, parachurch groups felt compelled to fill a perceived need in kingdom-building work. Cru, like its predecessors and contemporaries, developed its structures and strategies within a specific context, in this case, mid-twentieth century America. To understand that context, this chapter will explore the relationship of parachurch ministries to the local church from both a theological and historical perspective, with a particular emphasis on the founding of student organizations like Cru. First, it will consider the biblical teaching about the church and explore the biblical foundations for parachurch organizations. Second, it will examine the historical and cultural influences that motivated the formation of these groups.

Biblical and Theological Perspectives

Those who defend the existence of parachurch ministries often look to the book of Acts for guidance, especially the calling and ministry of Paul. These narratives offer a glimpse into how the young church set apart those for ministry and sent them out to fulfill their calling. This section will examine and evaluate the structures and strategies of sending in Acts. Key in this discussion are the descriptions of how Paul and his companions were sent out by the church in Antioch in chapters 13 and 15. Contextually, these events happen early in the life of the church but not before other key milestones. The church scattered after the stoning of Stephen in chapter 7. In chapter 8, Philip preached to the Samaritans. Then, Luke recounts in chapters 10 and 11 how devout, God-fearing Gentiles received the gospel under Peter's preaching. Each of these reflects the fulfillment of Christ's words to his followers in chapter 1: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8).[1]

Acts 13

By the time the reader reaches chapter 13, there should be little surprise that the gospel message continues to spread into unreached lands. This account, however, marks a transition in the process. Up to this point, the gospel and its messengers moved naturally and informally.[2] In Antioch, though, something unique happened. As the prophets and teachers worshiped with prayer and fasting, the Holy Spirit spoke. He instructed them to set Barnabas and Saul apart for "the work to which [He had] called them" (Acts 13:2).

From the text, it is unclear whether the entire church in Antioch was gathered

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[1] Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture references are from the *English Standard Version*.

[2] One might argue that Philip's supernatural transport to meet the Ethiopian eunuch and Peter's vision in chapter 10 that led him to Cornelius are anything but informal. However, as a specific transition point in the movement of the gospel, those types of events would not have been the experience of most Christians.

for this event or just the group called prophets and teachers. New Testament scholar David Peterson believes this to be a gathering of the smaller group of prophets and teachers mentioned in verse 1.[3] Ajith Fernando disagrees. In his commentary on Acts, he understands it to be the whole church. He bases this on the meaning of a form of *leitourgeo*, which is translated as "worshiping" in verse 2.[4] Its semantic range throughout classical Greek covered forms of service, both public and private. The *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis* states that in the LXX, "The words in this group were especially suited for expressing the notion of cultic service because it was public, fixed, and regulated by law, and the welfare of the people of God depended on it."[5] This cultic meaning extends to its use in the New Testament, especially in Hebrews where Old Testament forms are contrasted with the work of Christ. In Philippians, Paul uses this word group to describe his ministry, the role of Epaphroditus, and the Philippians' service to him. In Acts 13:2, Luke uses it "to describe what was evidently a time of spiritual worship in the church in Antioch."[6] Therefore, as New Testament professor and scholar Brian Vickers notes, "Although only the leaders are named, it seems likely that the entire congregation are the ones worshiping and fasting."[7]

Even with the debate about whether or not the whole church was present in Acts 13:2, the following verse suggests the whole church responded obediently and immediately with more fasting and prayer before laying their hands on the two and sending them off. The act of sending in this case denotes their being "set free" for a task. In other words, the church released the pair to fulfill what the Holy Spirit set them apart

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[3] David G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 375.

[4] Ajith Fernando, *Acts*, NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 374.

[5] Moisés Silva, *NIDNTTE*, 3:104–6.

[6] Silva, *NIDNTTE*, 3:106.

[7] Brian J. Vickers, *Acts*, in *ESV Expository Commentary*, vol. 9, *John-Acts*, ed. Iain M. Duguid, James R. Hamilton Jr., and Jay Sklar (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2019), 459.

to do. As New Testament commentator Howard Marshall concludes, "The importance of the present narrative is that it describes the first piece of planned 'overseas mission' carried out by representatives of a particular church, rather than by solitary individuals, and begun by a deliberate church decision, inspired by the Spirit, rather than somewhat more casually as a result of persecution."[8] As Marshall points out and as this section has established, this act by the church in Acts 13 sets the pattern for how future missionary endeavors should begin. The church and its leadership are closely involved in sending laborers out for ministry.

Acts 15

Upon their return, Paul and Barnabas "gathered the church together" and "declared all that God had done with them, and how he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles" (Acts 14:27). Marshall comments, "It was natural and right that the church which had sent them out as missionaries should welcome them back and receive a report on their activity."[9] Soon after, though, dissension arose between the church in Antioch and representatives from Jerusalem who taught the necessity of circumcision for salvation. This was not the message Paul and Barnabas preached to the Gentiles, and, as Peterson remarks, "Paul and Barnabas presumably had an eye to the possible impact of the teaching on the churches they had just founded elsewhere."[10] Therefore, the church that commissioned Paul and Barnabas for ministry appointed them, along with others (Acts 15:2), to seek guidance from the elders in Jerusalem.

The Jerusalem Council proved to be another pivotal moment. In evaluating the question about circumcision, this council of elders would either affirm or deny the work

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[8] I. Howard Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 214.

[9] Marshall, *Acts*, 242.

[10] Peterson, *Acts*, 422.

of Paul and Barnabas up to this point and any future endeavors.[11] After much debate, the Council concluded that Paul's and Barnabas's message and ministry were valid. Gentile believers would not be required to receive circumcision as a condition of their salvation. They would, however, be required to avoid practices that risked offending Jewish believers. Though the "apostles and elders were gathered together to consider this matter" (Acts 15:6), "the whole church" (Acts 15:22) selected representatives to accompany the Antioch group to deliver the letter. With the letter complete, the Jerusalem church sent Paul and Barnabas back to Antioch, along with the Jerusalem envoy. The word translated "sent off" in verse 30 again carries the idea of release, which in this sense seems to be directed at their message rather than their call to ministry. The Council agreed that what they preached was good and set them free to continue their mission with that message. Judas and Silas, who represented the Jerusalem faction, stayed for a time in Antioch after delivering the letter from the Council before being "sent off in peace by the brothers to those who had sent them" (Acts 15:33). That the church let them go "with the blessings of peace indicates reconciliation between the churches after the disruption caused by those who came down from Judea to Antioch in the first place."[12]

The Argument for "Separate and Necessary" from Acts 13 and 15

Though the ministry of Paul and Barnabas and the proceedings at the Jerusalem Council are significant issues, the focus of this chapter centers on what Acts teaches believers about sending missionaries. This point is important when considering the debate surrounding parachurch ministries. If Paul and his band are to be the model for

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[11] Though there is disagreement, most conservative scholars believe this to be Paul's third trip to Jerusalem and the second time he sought affirmation of his message and ministry from church leaders there. He recounted his first meeting with the leaders in Galatians 2:1–10. Even then, he wanted "to make sure that [he] was not running or had not run in vain" (v. 2). He wrote that they "added nothing" (v. 6) to his message, but instead, "they gave the right hand of fellowship" (v. 9). Because the first was done privately (v. 2), a second affirmation made public should not be seen as a contradiction or blending of the accounts.

[12] Peterson, *Acts*, 441.

modern missions, then the way they are sent must be considered thoroughly.

For the last fifty years, wide-ranging debates have continued around the relationship between the respective roles of the church and the parachurch. Two generations ago, Ralph Winter shifted the landscape of evangelical missions with the "Two-Structures" model. His paradigm differentiated between modalities (local church structures) and sodalities (parachurch structures) and offered two principles that govern the distinction: not only must both structures be accepted as legitimate, but sodalities must be utilized for the church to be effective.[13] Like many missiologists, he looked to Acts 13 for scriptural support. Winter noted, "Once away from Antioch [Paul] seemed very much on his own."[14] As a result, he categorized Paul's missionary band as "something definitely more than the extended outreach of the Antioch church."[15] In fact, Winter concludes, "Paul was 'sent off' not 'sent out' by the Antioch congregation. He may have reported back to it but did not take orders from it. His mission band (sodality) had all the autonomy and authority of a 'traveling congregation.'"[16] Thus, Winter formalized in writing what had been true in practice for many parachurch groups. Churches might affirm a missionary's call, but the relationship changes once the missionary departs.

In the years following, others took up Winter's approach to the narrative in Acts 13, refining and expanding it. Jerry White picked up the argument in his 1983 book, *The Church and the Parachurch: An Uneasy Marriage*. Like Winter, White distinguished between local congregations and mobile teams of missionaries. He stated, "We must recognize every ministry structure other than a local congregation as a para-local church

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[13] Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne, eds., introduction to "The Two Structures of God's Redemptive Mission," by Ralph D. Winter, in *PWCM*, chap. 39, Kindle.

[14] Winter, "The Two Structures," sec. 1, para. 4.

[15] Winter, "The Two Structures," sec. 1, para. 6.

[16] Winter, "The Two Structures," sec. 2, para. 10.

structure."[17] According to White, Paul and his companions would be included in the para-local church category. "Paul founded several local congregations," White argued, "but the Scriptures do not indicate that he was under the authority of any."[18] He based this on the accounts in Acts 13 and 15. According to White, Paul was sent from Antioch by both the Holy Spirit and the church, but he does not seem to remain under the church's authority. White believed Paul took a defensive posture at the Jerusalem Council and viewed the Council's letter as permissive rather than directive and "still infused with legalism."[19] In other words, Paul did not seek the approval of the Council as much as he sought to explain his actions.[20] Like Winter, White maintained that Paul and his group existed as a separate and fully autonomous missionary entity.

Professor of missiology Arthur Glasser supported this perspective. In his article, "The Apostle Paul and the Missionary Task," he stated about Acts 13,

> From this we cannot but conclude that both the congregational parish structure and the mobile missionary band structure are equally valid in God's sight. Furthermore, there is no warrant for the view that Paul, for all his apostolic authority, was sent forth by the church (God's people in local, visible congregational life and in associational relationship with other congregations) and, equally important, felt himself answerable to the church.[21]

As missionary Philip Elkins more succinctly stated, since Luke identified the Holy Spirit as the "sending agent," Paul's group was free to work independently of their "sending

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[17] Jerry White, *The Church and the Parachurch: An Uneasy Marriage* (Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1983), 64. White earlier defines a para-local church as "any spiritual ministry whose organization is not under the control or authority of a local congregation." White, *The Church and the Parachurch*, 19.

[18] White, *The Church and the Parachurch*, 37.

[19] White, *The Church and the Parachurch*, 37. White also takes the position that the events in Acts 15 and Galatians 2 occur simultaneously.

[20] Overall, White took a mediating view. He concluded, "Paul, as well as Barnabas and other NT missionaries, was not solely under the authority of a specific church." White, *The Church and the Parachurch*, 37. The use of the word "solely" allowed White to hedge his perspective. Ultimately, this diplomatic approach prevented him from taking a firm stance. This may not have necessarily been a problem, but it kept his argument at a surface level. He did not dive deeply into the texts in question. As a result, his argument comes across as simplistic.

[21] Arthur F. Glasser, "The Apostle Paul and the Missionary Task," in *PWCM*, chap. 25, sec. 2, para. 4, Kindle.

church."[22]

More recently, Sam Metcalf has offered one of the more in-depth perspectives on Acts 13 rooted in Winter's school of thinking. Like others in this camp, he clearly distinguishes modalities from sodalities and equates them, saying, "Both are the church. Both are necessary."[23] In Acts 13, Metcalf sees the operative agent as the Holy Spirit, not the local church, since Paul and Barnabas were "released" by the church but "sent" by the Holy Spirit.[24] He states, "There is no exegetical evidence to support the oft-cited perspective that the Antioch church somehow exercised authority." Further, he claims, "There is no New Testament text that describes a local congregation as 'sending' or 'commissioning' people for long-term pioneer missionary service to plant churches where there were none."[25] In the case of Antioch, Metcalf cites the possibility that those who released the missionaries were not elders; therefore, they held no authority in the sending process and by extension carried no authority in Paul's ministry.[26] He says, "There is no evidence that Antioch, or any other local congregation, played a controlling role in the function and decisions of Paul and his apostolic teams." In fact, he asserts, "There is no evidence that his efforts or the effort of his missionary bands were under the authority and control of local congregations. In fact, the reverse is actually more accurate."[27] Paul

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[22] Philip Elkins, "A Pioneer Team in Zambia, Africa," in *PWCM*, chap. 112, sec. 1, para. 3, Kindle.

[23] Sam Metcalf, *Beyond the Local Church: How Apostolic Movements Can Change the World* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2015), 28.

[24] Metcalf, *Beyond the Local Church*, 34.

[25] Metcalf, *Beyond the Local Church*, 35.

[26] Metcalf, *Beyond the Local Church*, 36–37. Citing Peter Wagner's commentary on Acts, one explanation Metcalf offers is that the prophets and teachers who released Paul and Barnabas in Antioch were missionaries themselves. He acknowledges it is speculative. However, if missionaries can "release" their own, it allows Metcalf to further his belief that sodalities should be completely autonomous from local congregational authority. This position leaves churches to play a secondary role.

[27] Metcalf, *Beyond the Local Church*, 39.

gave instructions to churches, not the other way around.[28]

Metcalf writes less about the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15. As a result, he fails to fully address the text, especially the sending/releasing wording used by both the Jerusalem Council and Antioch. Instead, he relies heavily on the work of Charles Mellis, who takes a negative view of the Council's participation. Mellis concludes, "Their principle [*sic*] linkage with the missionary bands seems to be an endless asking of nit-picking doctrinal questions."[29] This is perhaps the most grievous error in Metcalf's examination. The Council was responsible for settling a dispute that threatened to destroy the nature of the gospel message. It did anything but nit-pick doctrinal issues. Mellis's view subverts the importance of guarding the message entrusted to the church. Both parties willingly submitted themselves and the content of their message to the decision of the Council. This is shown in the response of the envoy sent back to Antioch, the church's response to the letter, and their commissioning of Paul and Silas to their next missionary journey.

The overall weight of Metcalf's argument rests largely on Scripture's silence. One result is a false dichotomy between the church and the parachurch. Since Scripture never describes Paul's work as an "aberration," Metcalf argues, believers have the freedom to describe Paul's work as an equal that bears no distinction in nature from a local church.[30] This logical fallacy unnecessarily sets one against the other—to be anything less than equal is to be an aberration. Metcalf's assertions also rely heavily on anachronism by projecting modern categories and practices onto the biblical texts. In Acts and throughout the rest of the New Testament, all ministry flowed out of the church for the purpose of establishing and building new local congregations. Leaders would have

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[28] I argue against this point in the following section.

[29] Charles Mellis, *Committed Communities: Fresh Streams for World Missions* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1983), 14–16, quoted in Metcalf, *Beyond the Local Church*, 41.

[30] Metcalf, *Beyond the Local Church*, 38.

had no paradigm that included the idea that any groups existed which worked outside of or in competition with the church.

Establishing a Biblical Philosophy for Sending Missionaries

Those who have followed Winter's perspective and hold to a "separate and necessary" position offer much to be considered on this topic. Their experience in the mission field and faithfulness to the mission of the church should not go unrecognized. However, their argument, though rooted in Scripture, leaves gaps in their view. The purpose of this section is to fill those gaps and give a more robust biblical perspective on the church's role in sending missionaries. It also argues that even though parachurch agencies are helpful to the church, these groups and their missionaries should remain appropriately subordinate to the church.

Scholars and authors hold to a consensus on the usage of the verb *apoluo* in Acts 13:3. Peterson sums it up well when he says, "The verb translated *sent them off* has the sense of 'release,' 'dismiss,' or 'send away, not 'appoint.'"[31] The distinction here is important, as much is made of the fact that Paul was initially "appointed" for ministry by Christ at the time of his conversion (Acts 9:15–16; 22:6–16; 26:12–18).[32] Peterson continues, "The revelation of the Holy Spirit in 13:2 was God's way of showing the leaders of the church something of his plan for Barnabas and Saul, so that they might

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[31] Peterson, *Acts*, 377.

[32] Metcalf and those he cites do not explore the words used in the narratives in any detail. Though they rightfully point out that *apoluo* is used in Acts 13:3 to describe the actions of the Antioch church in sending Paul and Barnabas, they set it in direct contrast to *pempo*, another Greek word that means "to send." See Metcalf's citation of Wagner, who contends for a separation between the two words (*Beyond the Local Church*, 35). Further, they fail to acknowledge that *pempo* and a related word, *propempo*, are used to relay the actions of the Jerusalem Council and Antioch (Acts 15:3, 22, 25). The church does, in fact, dispatch and equip emissaries for special tasks. The church also "releases" men for duties other than missionary journeys. In Acts 15:30, the Council sends off (*apoluo*) the envoy with the letter to Antioch, and in 15:33 the leaders in Antioch send (*apoluo*) Judas and Silas away in peace. It should also be noted that many commentators acknowledge the meaning of *apoluo* but rarely grant the distinction between it and *pempo* much attention. Acts 15:33 also utilizes a form of the word *apostello* to describe the nature in which Judas and Silas were sent from Jerusalem. This shows that church leaders were not limited to merely "releasing" missionaries for ministry. They had authority to send in the fullness of its meaning.

willingly release them from their responsibilities at Antioch and prayerfully support them in their God-given mission."[33] As New Testament scholar Eckhard Schnabel summarizes,

> The narrative of Paul and Barnabas, commissioned by the church in Antioch to engage in a new missionary effort and to proclaim the gospel . . . emphasizes that missionary work is authenticated by the Holy Spirit, supported by the local church in Antioch, characterized by geographical movement, and focused on proclaiming the word of God.[34]

The question that remains is whether this distinction between sending and releasing carries with it the removal of any authority or responsibility on the part of the "releasing" church. This is the crux of the argument made by those who hold to a "separate and necessary" position for parachurch groups. Metcalf, for example, states, "There are no examples anywhere in Scripture of local church governance of the missionary undertaking."[35] To the contrary, the full context of Scripture appears to contradict that conclusion and support the idea that Paul and others like him were not fully autonomous entities.

The fact that missionaries are sent off, released, or commissioned by the church in its earliest form carries significant implications for how the modern church understands its role in the continuing work of missions. The narratives in Acts 13 and 15 are a microcosm of what should be expected on a macro level for future endeavors. They reveal at least four areas of concern that must be considered in relation to how missionaries are sent and how those missionaries relate to their sending churches.

First, how will those who are called to full-time Christian missionary service be identified? In the case of Paul and Barnabas, they were already serving in the church from which they were sent. This is an important first step in the sending process. The task a missionary is sent to accomplish carries special significance due to the fragility of the

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[33] Peterson, *Acts*, 377.

[34] Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Acts*, Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 561.

[35] Metcalf, *Beyond the Local Church*, 35.

message. Commenting on Acts 13:3, Darrell Bock states, "God calls those among the most gifted out from the larger community."[36] Fernando adds, "The message the church received was to release their best for missionary service, and their earnestness was such that they were willing to do so. This is typical of churches that have a missionary vision."[37] The fact that these traits can be identified in prospective missionaries implies that those entrusted with the message should be known to be reliable and faithful for the task.

Second, both Acts 13 and 15 indicate that Antioch and Jerusalem maintained an authoritative role in Paul's ministry. The laying on of hands in Antioch bestows authority by an authority.[38] This act of commissioning reflects the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18–20, where Jesus emphasizes that all authority is given to him; therefore, he commissions his followers. The church in Antioch also performs the role of affirming Paul's call to missional work. As Schnabel explains, "The commissioning by the church in Antioch does not mark the beginning of the missionary work of either Barnabas or Saul/Paul, but should be seen as confirming their missionary calling and as inaugurating a new phase of missionary work."[39] The church's role in affirming implies it also had the authority to disavow their calling. To say it another way, the act of sending/releasing implies authority on the part of the party who sends/releases. Antioch's authority to send is also displayed in its appointing Paul and Barnabas as the church's representatives to the Jerusalem Council. Brian Vickers observes, "The believers in Antioch did not send Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem to see what believers at large thought about the Gentile

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[36] Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 439.

[37] Fernando, *Acts*, 377.

[38] The church in Jerusalem did the same when it set apart the seven men to serve the widows in Acts 6.

[39] Schnabel, *Acts*, 555.

question; they sought the opinion of the apostles and leaders."[40] Paul's encounter with the Council furthers the idea of an authoritative structure. While there, Paul and Barnabas sought validity for their ministry. In its decision, a governing body within the church hierarchy assists two parties in resolving their dispute about the message of their missional work. It is fair, then, to conclude that Paul and his companions saw themselves as an extension of the church rather than an independent entity with the authority to make autonomous decisions. When the Council pronounces its judgment about circumcision, parties on both sides of the issue find it pleasing and submit to it. This lays the groundwork for mutual ministry when Silas, originally of the Jerusalem faction, partners with Paul in a sign of joint agreement and camaraderie.

Third, in releasing them for ministry, the church at Antioch held expectations for Paul and Barnabas. Though they were not given a specific direction, they were not sent off without a purpose. Going back to his conversion on the road to Damascus, Paul received a unique designation compared to the more general call given to all believers. Even so, it bound him, requiring him to faithfully preach the gospel with which he had been entrusted. He was not free to alter his mission in any way he chose. This holds true when the church sends him and Barnabas to represent the church in Jerusalem before the Council and, again, when the Council sends him back to report its verdict to Antioch. In both cases, the church and the Council bore the authority to send and expected those sent to complete their task faithfully.

Finally, having expectations implies accountability. Evidence for this in Paul's ministry can be found in Acts 14:24–28, where Paul and Barnabas report back to the church in Antioch. Yet, this is not new or unique to Paul and Barnabas. From the earliest days of the new church's evangelistic effort, the leaders engaged in confirming and affirming what was preached to maintain the integrity of the gospel message. After

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[40] Vickers, *Acts*, 481.

Stephen's martyrdom, Philip preached the gospel in Samaria. In Acts 8:14–16, the leaders in Jerusalem sent Peter and John to verify their faith. After Cornelius's household received the gospel, Peter reported back to the church in Jerusalem and encountered opposition from the circumcision party. However, the church affirmed his ministry in Acts 11:17–18. Again, after opposition from the circumcision party, Paul headed to Jerusalem for a hearing before the council of elders. In each of these cases, Philip, Peter, and Paul submitted themselves to church leaders by giving an account of what they had done.

In all of this, one must consider to what degree the decisions in Acts can be considered normative and whether they set precedent. Luke's entire work is set during a unique point of church history. Some accounts in Acts are viewed to be true and normative, like spreading the gospel message across all ethnic and gender boundaries. On the other hand, practices like speaking in tongues as a sign of the Spirit's filling are understood to be true but not viewed by most as universally normative for church doctrine. Another case in point would be Paul's experience on the road to Damascus and his commission from Christ. Though all believers can claim the Great Commission, Paul's unique experience should not be viewed as normative. Similarly, the account in Acts 13:1–3 offers general guidelines for how churches should send missionaries, but the specifics of Paul's experience in Antioch need not be normative. Church leaders might not hear directly from the Holy Spirit as they did in Antioch. The apostolic authority Paul claimed for his ministry does not transfer to the ministries of other missionaries.[41] This point becomes more poignant when considering the rest of the New Testament and Paul's instructions to churches to which he ministered.

Paul's Epistles offer a fuller understanding of his perspective on the role and

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[41] Admittedly, this raises several questions regarding church polity that go beyond the scope of this paper. For example, in areas like church planting, at what point are those who are sent to start a new church considered to be autonomous and self-sustaining?

authority of the church in the lives of believers, both individually and corporately. For example, in 1 and 2 Corinthians, Paul gives instructions about church membership (1 Cor 5), church discipline (1 Cor 6), the practice of sacraments (1 Cor 11), how the church functions together like a body (1 Cor 12–14), and how the church participates in the mission (2 Cor 8–9). It is the place where disputes can be arbitrated. It is the avenue through which believers can exercise their spiritual gifts. It is the house of worship where believers gather locally as a unified body to hear the preaching of the Word and partake of the sacraments. It partners in the mission through giving and sending. In other words, the church is the seat of spiritual authority and the spiritual lifeblood of a believer.

In the Pastoral Epistles of 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus, Paul gives advice for establishing and ordering churches. He instructs these two young pastors about the qualifications of those who will hold offices of leadership (1 Tim 3; Titus 1). He offers wisdom about spiritual growth within the church and proper worship (1 Tim 1 and 5; 2 Tim 2; Titus 2). He counsels them in their own spiritual growth (1 Tim 4; 2 Tim 1). He advises them in complex realities of pastoral ministry: recognizing false teachers (1 Tim 1 and 6; 2 Tim 3; Titus 1), evangelism, and conflict resolution. Through these letters, Paul shapes and sharpens the young pastors' personal holiness. He teaches them how to lead and to exhort their congregations.

Noticeably missing from Paul's letters is specific instruction about how parachurch ministries as independent structures function alongside the church.[42] Instead, in warning the churches about false teachers both inside and outside the church, he bestows the responsibility on the church to avow or disavow another's ministry. The implication is that any ministry is subordinated to the leadership of a local congregation,

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[42] Some might argue that he wrote to instruct modalities, specifically. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that instructions for parachurch ministry are absent. They contend that Paul's authority and the legitimacy of his ministry stood separate from a local congregation and would, as a result, not be included on principle. One might reply that the absence of any real support is why proponents of the "separate and equal" position rarely turn to Paul's letters to support their view.

even if it originates outside of that congregation. Though the role a parachurch organization can play in advancing the kingdom should not be discounted, this absence should not go without notice. The church as the bride of Christ is manifested throughout Scripture in its local form. The role of parachurch organizations should be to support and strengthen it, rather than work independently of it. Parachurch workers, therefore, should hold membership in a local church and value its spiritually authoritative role in their lives with the highest regard. The next section will explore how perspectives on this relationship have changed historically.

Historical Perspectives and Developments

From its earliest days, the church crossed cultural, political, gender, and socio-economic boundaries. What began as a small group of Jewish-background believers meeting in homes in Jerusalem now spans the globe. Even as it has endured growing pains, the church has remained generally unified on the central tenets of the faith—most notably the belief in Christ's death as an atoning sacrifice for sin. Within this expansion and increased diversity, though, ecclesiology has evolved as well. As a result, the church has adapted its understanding and practice of the principles from Acts 13 and 15. What accounts for that change? What cultural and phenomenological influences aided in that process? This section will briefly highlight some of those influences as it traces the mission of the church, the advent of modern parachurch movements, and changes in the relationship between missionaries and the church.

Pre-evangelical Era

As the church transitioned from the apostolic age of the first century, it maintained a missionary mindset, and the gospel message continued to spread through the efforts of lay people. Often, though, the mission of the church was carried out by monastic communities who sought to advance the gospel message and effect societal change. Missionary monks are often held up as an example of a parachurch structure

since they evince a calling to full-time ministry separate from other believers. However, there is no clear consensus that the early church (100–750) endorsed any independent organizational structures that stood outside of church authority.[43] Though monks voluntarily cloistered themselves to focus on personal piety through asceticism, their separation happened within the broader church rather than apart from it. They subordinated themselves to the teaching and leadership hierarchies of the church.[44] History also shows that monks were set apart and sent out by church leadership for missionary efforts. Missiologist Edward Smither notes, "Boniface was set apart by Bishop Gregory II (669–731) of Rome as a missionary envoy to the Frisians."[45] These missionaries also stayed connected with those who sent them. As missiologist Pierce Beaver writes, "Boniface sent reports and requests to the church 'back home' in England, and discussed strategy with them as well."[46] This same pattern continued in the Eastern

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[43] Though this time is often referred to as the Patristic Era, I am following the nomenclature used by Edward L. Smither in *Christian Mission: A Concise Global History* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019). A minority of scholars locate the roots of parachurch ministries as far back as the Old Testament through rather dubious connections. Metcalf, for example, identifies groups like Nazirites, the school of the prophets, Essenes, and Jesus with his disciples as evidence of second-decision people who function independently of their contemporary religious structures. Metcalf, *Beyond the Local Church*, 31–34.

[44] Gregg R. Allison, *Historical Theology: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 528. Metcalf positively emphasizes the presence of monasticism to bolster his argument for "second decision people" who "make a deliberate *vocational* choice to join an order, a mission organization *apart from* the local church." Metcalf views the decision to join a monastic order as mainly vocational and separate from local church life. He even criticizes the Reformers' rejection of monasticism because it produced a "functionally truncated ecclesiology that hampered Protestants' ability to live out the *missio dei*." Metcalf, *Beyond the Local Church,* 47–48. However, this is a simplistic way of viewing the very complex nature of monastic life and the concerns of the Reformers. Monasticism had not just attracted second decision people into a vocation; it produced second-tier Christians. According to Allison, men like Luther rejected monasticism because "it confused the common people, giving them the wrong idea of how to live a holy life." Allison, *Historical Theology*, 532. For further reading about the history and purpose of monasticism, see Greg Peters, *The Story of Monasticism: Retrieving an Ancient Tradition for Contemporary Spirituality* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015) and Peter Brown, "The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity," *Journal of Roman Studies* 61 (1971): 80–101.

[45] Smither, *Christian Mission*, 27. For further overviews of the Christian mission, see Roger E. Hedlund, *The Mission of the Church in the World* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991); Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions*, Penguin History of the Church 6 (New York: Penguin Books, 1990); Craig Ott, Stephen J. Strauss, and Timothy C. Tennent, *Encountering Theology of Mission: Biblical Foundations, Historical Developments, and Contemporary Issues* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010).

[46] R. Pierce Beaver, "The History of Mission Strategy," in *PWCM*, chap. 37, sec. 1, para. 1, Kindle.

Orthodox Church, where the role and purpose of missionaries sent by the church was to establish more churches. Smither summarizes, "According to the author of the Didache (early second century), Origen, and Eusebius of Caesarea, the early church communities sent unnamed, itinerant evangelists to travel and cross cultures to proclaim the gospel. These early Christian missionaries were anonymous, bi-vocational, church-centered, cross-cultural laborers for the gospel."[47] However, he asserts, "The church provided authority, sponsorship, and support for mission activity."[48]

Through the medieval period (750–1500), little changed in the way the church executed its mission. Along with laypeople, missionary bishops and monks continued their work to spread the gospel to those who had not heard. Because the church and state were united, kings commissioned missionaries at times and requested that missionaries be sent to them at other times.[49] Yet, the mission of the church remained the work of the church. Within this framework, new monastic orders formed, but they formed under church rule and teaching. Just prior to the Reformation and in the centuries that followed (1500–1800), the Catholic Church dominated missionary efforts around the globe. This was aided in large part by the imperial enterprises of France, Spain, and Portugal. As lands were colonized, monastic missionaries followed. During this time, one of the earliest mission societies, the Foreign Mission Society of Paris, was formed by the Jesuit Alexander de Rhodes.[50]

Unlike its counterpart, the burgeoning Protestant movement would not see a viable, well-structured mission strategy until the early-1700s. Smither offers four reasons for this absence. Most prominently he observes,

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[47] Smither, *Christian Mission*, 39–40.

[48] Smither, *Christian Mission*, 42. There are certainly well-known names from this period, like Columba or Patrick. However, like today, most evangelistic work was done by unknown missionaries and laypeople.

[49] See Smither, *Christian Mission*, 52–60

[50] Beaver, "The History of Mission Strategy," sec. 3, para. 6.

> Protestants lacked missionary sending structures. . . . The Reformers were so focused on eliminating the works righteousness they associated with the monasteries that they opted to shut them down altogether. While they did not value monastic orders as a means for mission, it appears that no other alternative structures for sending missionaries to the world were considered. . . . Ultimately, the general Protestant focus on Europe seems best explained by how the magisterial Reformers understood the meaning of mission. . . . [They] strived to renew the church through the pure preaching and teaching of the Scriptures. . . . Reformation mission could best be described as a mission to evangelize and teach the established church.[51]

Though early strategies were employed by some Protestant colonists among indigenous people, the most concerted efforts would come from the Moravians. Founded by Count Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf (1700–1760), the Moravian Church also marked a shift in thought and strategy when Zinzendorf opened what became in practice a Protestant monastery at his estate. After experiencing a spiritual revival, the group began sending missionaries around the world in 1732. However, in contrast to their Catholic predecessors and Protestant contemporaries, Moravian missionaries were self-supported, and as Beaver notes, "That emphasis led to the creation of industries and businesses that not only supported the work, but also brought the missionaries into close contact with the people."[52] The Moravians also reflected the fragmented nature of Protestantism and provided an early glimpse into what would form by the end of the eighteenth century—an environment in which liberty from the establishment and freedom of private judgment pervaded.

Evangelical Era

To understand modern parachurch groups is to understand the importance of revival to evangelicalism. Though often associated with a modern movement, the roots of the term "evangelical" extend back much further in the history of the church. Historian

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[51] Smither, *Christian Mission*, 89. Smither does acknowledge that the Reformers sent preachers across Europe. However, he contends that their efforts fell far short of future enterprises. For a more detailed look at missionary sending during the Reformation era, see Michael A. G. Haykin and C. Jeffrey Robinson Sr., *To the Ends of the Earth: Calvin's Missional Vision and Legacy* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014).

[52] Beaver, "The History of Mission Strategy," sec. 7, para. 1.

Mark Noll writes that as early as the Middle Ages, "evangelical" was used to describe the gospel message and the texts that contained that message in Scripture.[53] By the sixteenth century, it began to be almost exclusively identified with the Protestant Reformation as a contrast to Catholic theology and practice. In the seventeenth century, Pietism formed in continental Europe. Their emphasis on inward spiritual renewal, active participation by laypeople in ministry, less focus on church order, and the use of the Bible by everyone provided more shape to evangelicalism.[54] Over the centuries, a precise definition for evangelicalism has been difficult to establish, but modern historian David Bebbington summarizes four characteristics of the movement. Broadly, evangelicals focus on conversion, the cross, the Bible, and activism.[55] These emphases have had a lasting impact on evangelical ministry. Specifically, evangelical thought has transformed preaching, and by extension, what pastors expected from their preaching. As lives were transformed by the faithful preaching of Scripture, revival often ensued. These revivals, in turn, affirmed and solidified certain methods, eventually creating a spiraling pattern of expectation and formulaic approaches.[56]

Almost one hundred years before the Great Awakening in the American colonies, Thomas Kidd notes that the Puritans were "lamenting the decline of their godly experiment" and recognized a need for heart reformation through a work of the Holy Spirit.[57] Desiring transformation, pastors instituted covenant renewals—corporate commitments that offered full membership for those who had only been baptized, or

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[53] Mark A. Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism: The Age of Edwards, Whitefield, and the Wesleys*, History of Evangelicalism Series 1 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 16.

[54] Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism*, 17–18.

[55] David W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Routledge, 1993), 2.

[56] For the foundations for these conclusions, see Thomas S. Kidd, *The Great Awakening: The Roots of Evangelical Christianity in Colonial America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007).

[57] Kidd, *The Great Awakening*, 1–2.

restoration for those trapped in sin. Solomon Stoddard (1643–1729), Jonathan Edwards's grandfather and a key leader in the practice, "developed the most elaborate evangelical theology of conversion prior to Edwards," which was characterized by powerful preaching, the Holy Spirit's work, and corporate-based conversions.[58] These renewals differed from later revivals in that they were scheduled in advance.

By the early part of the eighteenth century, pastors began to see revival as a season of special work by the Holy Spirit. This outpouring came about during the everyday practice of ministry. There were no organized meetings, no dramatic emotional responses, and no calls to come to the altar and be saved. Historian Iain Murray believes that "American history was shaped by the Spirit of God in revivals of the same kind as launched the early church into a pagan world."[59] Colonial revival was marked by two key influences: pietism and Puritanism. This Reformed Pietism was characterized by small-group ministry, asceticism, and a willingness to challenge the spiritual state of both clergy and congregants.[60] This early form of American evangelicalism broke through denominational lines as well as ethnic and gender divides, but it also met with contention surrounding training, ordination, and itinerancy. Itinerant preachers, taking advantage of the seasons of awakening, proliferated in the American landscape. Protestant church leaders were forced to wrestle with the question of legitimacy within their own ranks. Where could preaching take place? By whom and to whom could it be done? Over the next century, two prominent figures stood out as catalysts of both change and controversy.

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[58] Kidd, *The Great Awakening*, 6.

[59] Iain H. Murray, *Revival and Revivalism: The Making and Marring of American Evangelicalism 1750–1858* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1994), xx.

[60] Kidd, *The Great Awakening*, 26–28.

George Whitefield (1714–1770)

In the first Great Awakening, George Whitefield stood at the center of this debate. Though a member of the Church of England, Whitefield's ministry mainly took place outside of the church. Rather than limit himself to one location, he travelled broadly with his message and preached in fields to accommodate the large crowds. Whitefield also partnered with non-Anglicans like the Presbyterians and the Baptists.[61] In September 1740, Anglican leaders confronted Whitefield about his methods and ministry. Whitefield responded, "It was best to preach the new birth, and the power of godliness, and not to insist so much on the form; for people would never be brought to one mind as to that, nor did Jesus Christ ever intend it."[62] In making this statement, Noll observes, "Whitefield's fellow Anglicans . . . had heard him articulate a defining principle of Protestant evangelicalism. The foundation was unswerving belief in the need for conversion (the new birth) and the necessity of a life of active holiness (the power of godliness)," which along with Whitefield's "flexibility with respect to church forms and inherited religious traditions, have always been important characteristics of evangelical movements."[63] However, the clarity and faithfulness of Whitefield's beliefs could not assuage resistance to his method. Whitefield stood firm in his conviction that gospel preaching should not be shackled. He stated, "Finding how inconsistent they were, I took my leave, resolving they should not have an opportunity of denying me the use of their pulpits."[64] Five years later, the questions had not dissipated. In one encounter, a group of ministers disparaged

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[61] Presbyterian pastor Gilbert Tennent (1703–1764) and his brothers ministered during the revival movements of the 1720s and 1730s, but like Whitefield, their early form of evangelicalism was met with controversy surrounding training, ordination, and itinerancy. Isaac Backus (1724–1806) was a leading figure in the Separatist Baptist movement who provided clear criteria for separating from an established church. As a result, Baptists were seen as a threat to the establishment and were often persecuted for their counter-cultural beliefs. Through their ministry among the slave population, for example, the seeds of abolition were sown as the gospel spread.

[62] George Whitefield, *George Whitefield's Journals* (London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1960), 458.

[63] Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism*, 15.

[64] Whitefield, *Journals*, 459.

Whitefield's willingness to preach to members of their churches and their members' willingness to listen. He contended, "The people had a right to private judgment and that [the minister] could not, upon Protestant principles, deny the liberty of hearing for themselves."[65]

The mounting controversies tested the limits of revival as key leaders debated issues like physical responses and emotional outbursts. These disagreements often centered on the differences between Calvinist and Arminian theology. Calvinists believed that grace was given to those who were called by God. They were emotionally reserved, hesitant to give assurance, and questioned "the aggressive tactics of some itinerants."[66] Arminians, on the other hand, believed grace was available for all. They saw emotion as a sign of conviction and viewed Calvinist doctrines as a hindrance.[67] These developments marked the transition from revival to revivalism—a seismic shift that would alter the landscape of evangelicalism.

Charles Finney (1792–1875)

No figure proved more incendiary during this second era of awakening than Charles Finney. Finney's conversion occurred in 1821, and he quickly devoted himself to ministry, attaining licensure in 1823. His ordination in the Presbyterian church followed in 1824, after serving as a frontier missionary. While preaching in western New York the following year, Finney witnessed what he described as a "powerful spiritual awakening."[68] He recollected about that time, "The Spirit of God came down with great power upon the people. So great and manifest was the outpouring of the Spirit, that in compliance with their earnest entreaty I concluded to spend the night there, and preach

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[65] Whitefield, *Journals*, 554.

[66] Kidd, *The Great Awakening*, 117.

[67] Murray, *Revival and Revivalism*, 177–84.

[68] Murray, *Revival and Revivalism*, 229.

again in the evening."[69] Finney scheduled several more meetings in that church before "God revealed to [him], all at once, in a most unexpected manner, the fact that he was going to pour out His Spirit at Gouverneur, and that [he] must go there and preach."[70] Within two years of this revival, though, other pastors questioned Finney's practices, specifically "the dangers of using or aiming at excitement to promote results."[71] In response, Finney and his camp questioned the commitment of his accusers, drawing lines between those who favored change and those who feared that the nature of revival was being altered.[72] In order to maintain the validity of his ministry, "The new measures were to be defended by Finney as of the essence of revival."[73]

As time went on, Finney came to believe that a lack of revival was the pastor's fault. In his *Lectures on Revivals of Religion*, Finney instructed his students on the role of a minister in revival and preparing the congregation to hear. He explained, "It is a point where almost all ministers fail. They know not how to wake up the church, and raise the tone of piety to a high standard, and thus clear the way for the work of conversion."[74] The minister's inability to contrive the proper environment caused Finney to lament the lack of revivals.[75] Churches also bore responsibility. In a subsequent chapter, Finney detailed twenty-four ways churches might hinder revival.[76] Under his influence, mankind came to

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[69] Charles G. Finney, *Autobiography of Charles Finney* ([New York?]: A. S. Barnes, 1876), chap. 9, "Return to Evans' Mill," para. 9, Kindle.

[70] Finney, *Autobiography of Charles Finney*, chap. 9, para. 10.

[71] Murray, *Revival and Revivalism*, 231.

[72] Murray, *Revival and Revivalism*, 235.

[73] Murray, *Revival and Revivalism*, 240.

[74] Charles G. Finney, *Lectures on Revivals of Religion*, 2nd ed. (New York: Leavitt, Lord, 1835), 162–63.

[75] Finney, *Lectures on Revivals of Religion*, 163.

[76] Finney, *Lectures on Revivals of Religion*, 257–70.

be seen as an agent of conversion rather than a vessel of the gospel.[77]

In the eighteenth century, revival as an unexpected outpouring of the Holy Spirit shaped the attitude of the church toward its mission. It revived the hearts of believers, transformed the hearts of unbelievers, and sparked a renewed interest in evangelism. During the Second Great Awakening in the nineteenth century, revivalism took the next step and shaped the means and methods of the church's mission, spawning "a new order of itinerant missionaries."[78] Revivalists held a strong belief in the power of the gospel. They made direct appeals for attendees to receive salvation and did not shy away from recognizing the legitimacy of immediate responses to that appeal. However, pragmatism fueled revivalism. Itinerant preachers were sent out with the expectation of seeing and reporting results.[79] This resulted in the personality of the preacher becoming more prominent, an emphasis on man's ability to believe, conjuring emotions to elicit a specific response, and a focus on numbers. The influence of revivalism would shape the missionary activities that it spawned, widening the distance between ministry agencies and the local church.

Modern Missions Movements

The age of revivals in church history propelled new generations into the mission field by sharpening the commitments of those who experienced them. The fervor of these decisions translated directly into a desire for participation in spreading the gospel. In the eighteenth century, seminaries were formed to train pastors who established new churches. During the middle decades, missionaries ventured into frontier regions to evangelize the native population and backcountry settlers. By the end of the century, Protestant ministry evolved into the next logical stage and imitated the efforts of their

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[77] Murray, *Revival and Revivalism*, 281.

[78] Murray, *Revival and Revivalism*, 238.

[79] Murray, *Revival and Revivalism*, 239.

Catholic counterparts by extending their work beyond their native borders to evangelize unreached people groups. By the end of the nineteenth century, however, missionary efforts would bend under the influence of revivalism as missionary agencies bought into its philosophies and methods. This section explores the rise of such agencies and their increasing separation from the local church.

In 1792, British pastor William Carey (1761–1834) published *An Enquiry into the Obligation of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens*. Carey started this work early in his pastoral career in Northamptonshire, but he would not complete it until several years later while pastoring in Leicester.[80] Influenced in part by the writings of Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758), Carey set forth to challenge the thought that believers should not engage directly in evangelistic efforts. At the time, some Calvinists staunchly opposed actively pursuing ministry among the heathen.[81] About the lack of missionary activity Carey lamented, "The work has not been taken up, or prosecuted of late years (except by a few individuals) with that zeal and perseverance with which the primitive Christians went about it."[82] In his estimation, too many Christians believed the work was either a task for those directly commissioned by Christ, the work within their country took precedence, or God's providence would ensure unbelievers heard the gospel. "It is thus," Carey remarked, "that multitudes sit at ease, and give themselves no concern about the far-greater part of their fellow-sinners, who to this day, are lost in ignorance and idolatry."[83] Carey argued clearly, logically, and biblically against these objections and conclusions. Not only had Catholic and Moravian

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[80] Ernest A. Payne, introduction to *An Enquiry into the Obligation of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens*, by William Carey (1792; repr., London: Carey Kingsgate Press, 1961), iii–iv.

[81] J. C. Ryland is reported to have told Carey at a minister's meeting, "Sit down, young man; when God wants to convert the heathen, He'll do it without your help or mine." Payne, introduction to *An Enquiry*, iii.

[82] Carey, *An Enquiry*, 8.

[83] Carey, *An Enquiry*, 8.

missionaries engaged in gospel work, but English traders entered new and exotic countries for the sake of financial promise. He urged, "Men can insinuate themselves into the favor of the most barbarous clans, and uncultivated tribes, for the sake of gain; and how different soever the circumstances of trading and preaching are, yet this will prove the possibility of ministers being introduced there; and if this is but thought a sufficient reason to make the experiment, my point is gained."[84] His arguments were enough to alter the trajectory of Protestant missions. In the fall of that same year, the Baptist Missionary Society was formed, and Carey himself would be its first supported international missionary.

Similar realizations and concerns about the fate of unreached nations occurred in America. In 1806, a small group of students who met for prayer and discussion took shelter from a thunderstorm underneath a haystack. While taking refuge, the conversation drifted toward the gospel reaching every nation, and each of the men in that group pledged his life to missionary service. Historian Kenneth Latourette noted, "It was from this haystack meeting that the foreign missionary movement of the churches of the United States had an initial main impulse."[85] By 1810, one of the group's leaders, Samuel Mills (1783–1818), had formed the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions at Congregational Andover Theological Seminary, a group that included future missionary Adoniram Judson.[86] Throughout the nineteenth century, the missionary impulse grew and new agencies formed. According to church historian Bruce Shelley, "The conversion of the heathen became one of the major concerns of local congregations in every city and town in the country." He continues, "By the end of the nineteenth century, almost every Christian body . . . in almost every country . . . had its share in the

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[84] Carey, *An Enquiry*, 12.

[85] Kenneth Scott Latourette, *These Sought a Country* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1950), 67.

[86] Bruce L. Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language*, 4th ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2013), 397.

missionary enterprise overseas."[87] Typically, college students and laypeople who committed themselves to the missionary call found themselves at the tip of these endeavors.

In the late nineteenth century, Dwight L. Moody (1837–1899), a stalwart of evangelical revivals, expanded his influence to include college campuses in Europe and America. Under his preaching ministry, groups like the "Cambridge Seven" and the Student Volunteer Movement (SVM) formed as a mechanism for sending a new generation of missionaries. The latter started in the northeast United States when four men (R. P. Wilder, John R. Mott, W. P. Taylor, and L. M. Riley) committed themselves to mobilizing college students for overseas missions after hearing Moody speak.[88] The group quickly recruited two thousand volunteers, which grew to three thousand the next year, causing one college president to observe "that the movement was of larger proportions than anything of the kind in modern times."[89] As a result of these revivals, parachurch groups like SVM and the YMCA bore significant influence on college campuses in the early twentieth century through Bible studies and evangelism.[90] By 1920, SVM peaked with 2,783 members and 637 departing for the mission field. For the next twenty years, however, the group would slowly decline. In 1940, there were only twenty-five members, and only a handful left for the field. By the end of World War II, it "almost ceased to be a decisive factor in the promotion of missionary projects."[91] Michael Gleason notes that during this same period, the YMCA shifted its focus. He remarks,

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[87] Shelley, *Church History*, 397–98.

[88] Wilder, the son of missionaries, attended a conference led by Moody in 1886. He convinced Moody to give a series of lectures on missions, and, in response, one hundred students decided to be missionaries. J. Edwin Orr, *Campus Aflame: A History of Evangelical Awakenings in Collegiate Communities* (Wheaton, IL: International Awakening Press, 1994), 105.

[89] Orr, *Campus Aflame*, 105.

[90] Michael F. Gleason, *When God Walked on Campus: A Brief History of Evangelical Awakenings at American Colleges and Universities* (Dundas, Ontario: Joshua Press, 2002), 79.

[91] Orr, *Campus Aflame*, 149.

"Diminishing interest in the salvation, training and sending out of college students was a fruit of such change."[92]

Even with the decline of significant groups like SVM and the YMCA, campuses remained a centerpiece for revival and sending. At Wheaton College in 1936, revival broke out among students, resulting in renewed interest in prayer, Christian service, and foreign missions. As a result, twenty-five students committed to serving overseas.[93] From there, the revival spread to other campuses like Columbia Bible College and Eastern Nazarene College. Out of these revivals, the Student Foreign Missions Fellowship was formed. Throughout the 1940s, student-focused mission organizations continued to develop. In 1943, the President of the Student Council at Wheaton College, Billy Graham (1918–2018), would experience a personal awakening during a revival. Working alongside Torrey Johnson (1909–2002) and Robert Cook (1912–1991), the founders of Youth for Christ who also attended Wheaton, Graham would go on to be one of the most influential evangelists in American history.[94] By 1949, many of the organizations that had led the way in evangelism and missions during the previous two decades were either in decline or had disappeared altogether. To fill that void, several new organizations formed. These included InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, Youth for Christ, the Navigators, and the Student Foreign Missions Fellowship (mentioned above), which partnered with InterVarsity to host the Urbana missions conference. Each of these organizations supplied the seedbed for the missions-minded veterans, many of whom entered college after returning from overseas service.

In 1949 and 1950, those seeds took root, and campuses across the country experienced spiritual awakenings. Timothy Beougher has noted, "The mid-twentieth

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[92] Gleason, *When God Walked*, 83.

[93] Orr, *Campus Aflame*, 160.

[94] Gleason, *When God Walked*, 82.

century revivals brought forth a new generation of Christian leaders."[95] In the following decade a "resurgence of evangelical Christianity in Christian colleges . . . was paralleled by a movement of vital evangelism in the universities and secular colleges."[96] This resurgence would be led in large part by the increased popularity of religious emphasis weeks and the various campus ministry organizations that formed. InterVarsity partnered with leading evangelists to reach college campuses, and, during this same period, Campus Crusade for Christ was founded by Bill and Vonette Bright.

Conclusion

The New Testament makes clear that the missionary call of Scripture extends beyond the initial commissioning of the disciples by Jesus at the end of each gospel. The book of Acts shows the early church extending the gospel into the far reaches of the known world, fulfilling Jesus's command in Acts 1:8 to be his witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. When missionary zeal has waned throughout the centuries, it has been renewed in the church through revivals. Spiritual awakenings resulted in a natural desire to see the gospel spread. Often laypeople and college students took up the call for missionary work, and voluntary societies formed as the infrastructure for sending. However, as Shelley observes, these societies were "invented to meet a need rather than for theological reasons, but in effect it undermined the established forms of church government."[97] The next chapter will survey and evaluate the contribution of Cru in the training, recruiting, and sending of college students to the mission field.

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[95] Timothy K. Beougher, "Student Awakenings in Historical Perspective," in *Accounts of a Campus Revival: Wheaton College 1995*, ed. Timothy K. Beougher and Lyle Dorsett (Wheaton, IL: Harold Shaw, 1995), 40.

[96] Orr, *Campus Aflame*, 185.

[97] Shelley, *Church History*, 397.

CHAPTER 3

EXAMINING CRU'S PHILOSOPHY ON STUDENT INVOLVEMENT AND SENDING

As parachurch organizations have become more ubiquitous, they have helped reshape the American church. Commenting on "the vitality of evangelicalism in modern America," historian John Turner mentions "the ability of evangelical parachurch organizations to creatively adapt and market their faith to modern culture."[1] Yet perspectives remain mixed about the benefits. Proponents emphasize the parachurch's flexibility, agility, and versatility in accomplishing God's mission. Detractors often question the extent of the parachurch's role and its tactics.

Cru has carved out its own place within this conversation.[2] The organization, which began by reaching college students, has crossed into multiple segments of society. Since its inception in 1951, "Crusade has become the largest non-philanthropic evangelical parachurch organization in the United States."[3] This is due in large part to Cru's commitment to train and equip believers in evangelism and discipleship and then send laborers out to train and equip others. This chapter focuses specifically on Cru's work with college students through its campus ministry. Thousands of students get involved with Cru and are taught to invest their lives in the Great Commission. Some of them will join Cru in some capacity when college ends.

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[1] John G. Turner, *Bill Bright and Campus Crusade for Christ: The Renewal of Evangelicalism in Postwar America* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 2.

[2] Campus Crusade for Christ rebranded its North American ministries as Cru in 2011. When referring to the organization's founding and events in its history, this chapter utilizes the original name, Campus Crusade for Christ.

[3] Turner, *Bill Bright and Campus Crusade for Christ*, 5.

The philosophies and practices Cru utilizes on campus maintain an abiding influence in the lives of the college students who become interns. This chapter begins with a summary of the key influences surrounding Cru's formation. Next, it analyzes Cru's strategy of win, build, and send. Finally, it examines the evangelistic tactics Cru uses, how students and staff are equipped spiritually, and their relationship to the local church.

The Formation of Cru

William Rohl Bright (1921–2003) was born in Coweta, Oklahoma, to a respected family in the community. Though raised in a church environment, his heart was not transformed by the gospel until the age of twenty-four. He had moved to Southern California after college, where he started a business in the confection industry. Despite his success, however, he found his life lacking. A series of providential circumstances led him to attend the evening young adult meetings at Hollywood Presbyterian Church (HPC).[4] At those meetings, he witnessed Christian devotion and fellowship in new and meaningful ways and heard the gospel presented clearly and directly. He also came under the influence of Henrietta Mears (1890–1963). Referred to simply as "Teacher," Mears had gained respect as a Christian educator and author. Bright remembered her as a woman that "commanded attention" and "struck [him] as loving, bold, wise, and articulate."[5] He later recalled, "She was another proof that my stereotype of Christianity had been wrong."[6] The truth of her words at those meetings pierced his heart, and in due time the seed took root.

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[4] Perhaps the most notable event was Bright's decision to pick up a hitchhiker on his first night in Los Angeles who happened to be part of Dawson Trotman's ministry, The Navigators. Michael Richardson, *Amazing Faith: The Authorized Biography of Bill Bright, Founder of Campus Crusade for Christ* (Colorado Springs: Waterbrook Press, 2000), 15.

[5] Richardson, *Amazing Faith*, 21–22. For more information about the life and influence of Henrietta Mears, see John G. Turner, "The Power behind the Throne: Henrietta Mears and Post-World War II Evangelicalism," *Journal of Presbyterian History (1997–)* 83, no. 2 (Fall/Winter 2005), 141–57.

[6] Bill Bright, *Come Help Change the World* (Orlando: NewLife, 1999), 25.

After his conversion, Bright committed himself fully to the work of ministry, and he quickly found himself in the position of leading others. He became president of the college Sunday school class at his church, and he was discipled by Mears. Her style, summarized in her "Ten Commandments," was very matter-of-fact, purposeful, disciplined, Bible-centered, and faith-stretching.[7] She viewed her role as training an army of laborers who would spread the gospel and equip other believers across every square inch of their personal spheres of influence. Mears's leadership would shape Bright's life, ministry philosophy, and ministry practice.

Bright's Vision

As Bright's faith grew, he longed for more rigorous training. He began by attending Princeton Seminary while running his business in California and leading at HPC. Princeton served as a proving ground for Bright. He honed his theology and oration skills, but the cross-country commute wore him down. Within a year, he made the decision to study at the recently formed Fuller Theological Seminary in Southern California, where he could continue his training, run his business, and remain under Mears's tutelage. Under both forces (Mears and Fuller), Bright became enraptured with the same desire as his mentor. He envisioned an army of students recruited for God to change the world. Along with two others, he formed the Fellowship of the Burning Heart. This compact unified under a commitment of personal devotion to discipleship founded on four guiding principles: "Discipleship is sustained solely by God alone through His Spirit. . . . Discipleship begins with Christian character. . . . Discipleship exercises itself principally in the winning of the lost to Christ. . . . Discipleship demands nothing less than absolute consecration to Christ."[8] In this commitment, Bright and his peers "recognized their calling to a life of expendability—saying no to self and yes to Christ,

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[7] Richardson, *Amazing Faith*, 26.

[8] Richardson, *Amazing Faith*, 37–38.

wherever that might lead."[9] As historian John Turner notes, this perspective played off "wartime images of soldiers who plunged into dangerous situations without regard for their own safety or self-interest."[10]

Their first critical test came in the summer of 1947 while preparing for a local college conference hosted by HPC, which they hoped to expand into a national event. Their passion and commitment sparked a spirit of revival among the young adults at the church. As Bright and his peers traveled to invite other churches to participate, that spark caught fire. Hundreds flocked to the conference, filling the retreat center beyond its capacity. The agenda for the conference was simple, and the message was plain. Mears "spoke of sin, confession, and the filling of the Holy Spirit."[11] The four-hour meeting was like the campus revivals common to that period, in which students shared stories of life change and God's calling on their lives.

Through his ongoing ministry at HPC and his studies at Fuller Seminary, Bright continued to be nurtured and equipped in his faith. He began applying what he learned and crafting new methods for sharing the gospel. At the same time, he grew increasingly restless and convinced that a change was in order. Bright found that many of his church's typical ministry venues like prisons and homeless shelters were also being targeted by other churches. This competition limited his church's opportunities for ministry. He recollected, "One day it dawned on me that there were no waiting lines to reach college students or the top executives of the city. Here were the neglected leaders of our world, both today's and tomorrow's."[12] This realization prompted numerous conversations about how to see this idea come to fruition. Friends and mentors like Mears

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[9] Richardson, *Amazing Faith*, 38.

[10] Turner observes that this challenge would have been especially attractive to those who just returned from war. Turner, *Bill Bright and Campus Crusade for Christ*, 26–27.

[11] Richardson, *Amazing Faith*, 43.

[12] Richardson, *Amazing Faith*, 53.

and Billy Graham (1918–2018) guided him in those early days of wrestling, and he valued their input.

However, three key events influenced Bright's decision to venture into full-time ministry. First, his perspective on the church motivated his move. Bright saw the body of Christ in his age as largely full of disobedient Christians who did not fulfill the basic obligations of their faith, resulting in "an impotent American church."[13] This perspective was colored and reinforced by a conflict with local denominational leaders and his eventual decision to leave the Los Angeles Presbytery.[14] The second event came in the form of "The Contract." Bright married Vonette Zachary in 1948, and they began to build a life together in Southern California. In the face of ever-increasing ministry responsibilities, they recognized the need to align their commitments as a married couple. Their discussion resulted in a unified vision in which they surrendered all of life to God. In hindsight, Bright "became increasingly persuaded that God would not have given him the vision for what became Campus Crusade for Christ 'had [he] not first surrendered [his] life totally, completely, and irrevocably to the lordship of Christ.'"[15]

The final event was Bright's literal vision. During a late-night study session, he recalled,

> Suddenly I sensed the presence of God in a way I had never known before. There was no audible voice; no heavenly choirs singing; no bright lights or bolts of lightning. However, the presence of the Almighty seemed so real that all I could do was wait expectantly for what he had to say. Within moments, I felt an amazing combination of peace and excitement, for I had the overwhelming impression that God had flashed on the screen of my mind His instructions for my life and ministry.[16]

Bright believed he had been called "to help reach the world for Christ and

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[13] Richardson, *Amazing Faith*, 57.

[14] Turner, *Bill Bright and Campus Crusade for Christ*, 36.

[15] Richardson, *Amazing Faith*, 60.

[16] Bright, *Come Help Change the World*, 35.

fulfill the Great Commission . . . by reaching the leaders on the college campuses of the United States and later the world."[17] As he described his experience to her, Vonette felt the same compulsion to venture out into ministry alongside her husband.

To test the merit of his vision, Bright first approached a beloved seminary professor, Wilbur Smith (1894–1976), who embraced and encouraged his passion. The Brights quickly established a twenty-four-hour prayer chain with church and seminary friends. Simultaneously, he continued sharing his ministry vision with mentors, friends, and authority figures. He also set up a board of ten diverse Christian leaders ranging from evangelists and professors to local businessmen. Among others, the team included Wilbur Smith, Henrietta Mears, and Billy Graham. With a foundation of prayer laid and the full confidence that they were doing what God desired, the Brights launched into full-time ministry in their characteristically unhesitating fashion. After recruiting and creating a team of student leaders out of HPC's young adult group, they hosted their first ministry event at UCLA's Kappa Alpha Theta sorority house in 1951. Campus Crusade for Christ (CCC) came to life.

Cru's Ministry Strategy

CCC's development followed a pattern laid out in the college department at HPC. Turner comments, "Bright absorbed Mears's understanding of Christianity and American culture." He goes on to explain that Mears "wanted to do more than create a few beacons of Christianity in a secularizing culture. She wanted to train leaders who would restore America to its Christian heritage."[18]

Founding Philosophies

A significant motivating factor for believers in that era was the fear of

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[17] Richardson, *Amazing Faith*, 61.

[18] Turner, *Bill Bright and Campus Crusade for Christ*, 25.

communism that pervaded the American landscape after World War II.[19] This, combined with the growing concern over secularism, created the framework around which Mears crafted her ministry strategy. This bled down to Bright so much that he integrated it into his own personal ministry philosophies and methodologies. "While Bright's primary focus was evangelism," Turner comments, "he viewed the work of Campus Crusade through the lens of Cold War geopolitics."[20] Beginning with the Fellowship of the Burning Heart, he realized he could "mimic the communists, form Christian 'cells,' and slowly build a movement of committed Christian youth."[21] In contrast to communist ideologies that squashed individual freedoms, Bright wanted to display the Christian life as a compelling adventure, and he sought to provide a "vibrant, growing movement that attracted the best and the brightest of the postwar generation."[22] As a response to secularism, he wanted to present "intelligent information concerning the claims of Christ."[23] Therefore, CCC often "targeted prominent student leaders, anticipating that

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[19] Contemporary scholars might label these views as Christian Nationalism. However, that would be reductionistic. Christian leaders of that era believed communism and secularism threatened more than the security of America (or any other country) as a nation. They believed those ideologies threatened hearts and minds by keeping non-Christians blinded to their need for redemption through Christ. In that regard, evangelism and missions arose as the key to thwarting their influence. At the same time, Bright once wrote, "America has a special relationship with God," and he held clear views on the role of Christianity in American society. Due to moral decline, he asserted, "Believers must seek God with all of their hearts in fasting and prayer before He will intervene to save America." Bill Bright, *The Coming Revival: America's Call to Fast, Pray, and "Seek God's Face"* (Orlando: NewLife, 1995), 37, 49. For more information on evangelicalism and fundamentalism in American politics, see George M. Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991)

[20] Turner, *Bill Bright and Campus Crusade for Christ*, 41. Concerning UCLA, Bright claimed, "The radical left controlled the student government and newspaper, and there was active Communist recruiting on campus." Bright, *Come Help Change the World*, 41.

[21] Turner, *Bill Bright and Campus Crusade for Christ*, 28. The "cell group" strategy would become an integral part of CCC's structure. However, it would not be tied to thwarting communist influences on campus. Instead, it would be likened to a human cell that continues to divide as it grows.

[22] Turner, *Bill Bright and Campus Crusade for Christ*, 36. This was the image portrayed for him when he was first exposed to the young adult ministry at HPC. He described the people at the first gathering he attended as "three hundred of the sharpest young adult men and women I had ever seen. They were happy, having fun, and obviously loved the Lord." Bright, *Come Help Change the World*, 22.

[23] Richardson, *Amazing Faith*, 44. The earliest version of *The Four Spiritual Laws* begins by drawing a comparison between natural laws and spiritual laws.

high-profile converts would attract the attention of other students."[24]

These reactions to cultural realities were meant to "stave off the threatened annihilation of civilization, now that the Cold War was revving up."[25] They were also meant to transform America as a part of a cultural milieu that fought to restore Christian principles into American life. "Evangelical leaders believed that they had lost their rightful place of leadership in American society," but "they were, however, a resilient and confident minority hopeful that evangelism would reconnect America with its Christian heritage."[26]

To accomplish this goal, the Brights constructed a pragmatic, utilitarian approach to ministry. It began with those they recruited to join the work. The Brights were intentional and specific about the type of workers they selected. Bright admitted, "The standards we established for new, full-time staff were high."[27] Eventually he gathered a contingent of six new staff. [28] With a small team in place, they set up a training center at their home. These sessions ranged from practical ministry training to teaching etiquette. For training materials, the Brights developed their own curriculum through the process of trial and error, using what worked and discarding the rest.[29] Bright's business background and his exposure to prominent evangelists of the day influenced his approach. He developed a basic gospel message and formed it as a "sales pitch."[30] Just

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[24] Turner, *Bill Bright and Campus Crusade for Christ*, 46.

[25] Richardson, *Amazing Faith*, 39.

[26] Turner, *Bill Bright and Campus Crusade for Christ*, 39.

[27] Bright, *Come Help Change the World*, 45

[28] Early on, Bright found it difficult to persuade others at church to join him on campus for evangelism. In turn, he questioned the church's commitment to the practice. This echoes Finney's response to pastors who were unable rouse their congregations as discussed in chapter 2 of this paper. Turner, *Bill Bright and Campus Crusade for Christ*, 30.

[29] Bright, *Come Help Change the World*, 46.

[30] Richardson, *Amazing Faith*, 71–72. These efforts and attitudes reflected the continuing influence of revivalism. Evangelistic work made use of methods and tactics that were believed to be

like a supervisor of young salesmen, Bright viewed the specific work of campus evangelism as "a weeding out process that would confirm whether or not God had called individuals to the ministry." [31]

This approach mirrored common evangelistic tactics utilized during that period. Turner observes, "The relationship between evangelism and other forms of salesmanship was obvious to many evangelists, including Billy Graham."[32] Bright gleaned from groups like The Navigators, Dawson Troutman's organization, which he admired for its aggressive style of evangelism and systematic approach to training believers. Bright also imitated Billy Graham, who used evangelistic meetings to reach the masses through broad gospel appeals. Bright tried similar schemes. He utilized "gospel-bombs" at local universities in addition to large meetings in the Greek system.[33]

Launching a Movement

Bill Bright always hoped the ministry of CCC would extend beyond the borders of one campus. Like Mears, Bright envisioned a throng of transformed, surrendered, and trained students spreading the gospel everywhere. Therefore, Richardson summarized, "In meetings and conferences, almost all the teaching messages would be designed to build Christians in the faith and challenge them to become disciples."[34] As the movement began to spread, Bright was often criticized for failing to nurture deep, healthy relationships with other campus ministries, local churches, or

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effective. While the gospel message was not lost, it could easily be overshadowed in favor of producing results.

[31] Turner, *Bill Bright and Campus Crusade for Christ*, 54. This view reflected a commitment to guard the distinctives Bright wanted to establish for his ministry, not a bent toward legalism.

[32] Turner, *Bill Bright and Campus Crusade for Christ*, 51.

[33] Turner, *Bill Bright and Campus Crusade for Christ*, 24. He learned the "gospel-bomb" method at HPC and even tried it during his days at Princeton. He and others would place gospel tracts on desks and tables all over campus.

[34] Richardson, *Amazing Faith*, 69.

denominational leaders. Turner writes that "Louis H. Evans, Sr. counseled Bright . . . to operate from within the church," but Bright rejected the idea, choosing to work on his own. Turner concludes that Bright questioned whether churches could effectively disciple and train new converts.[35] Bright, convinced of his calling, certainly maintained an entrepreneurial resolve when it came to formulating strategies and practices. However, Turner's assessment only paints a partial picture. As Richardson described it, Bright believed it required "a strong church to take the initiative to reach the world with the good news of Christ."[36] So while he might have held separatist views in the earliest stages of forming CCC, he became committed "to always be a supportive partner of the church . . . and [gaining] disciples in the churches of America was central to his vision."[37] This vision began to bear fruit less than a decade after its birth, when CCC inaugurated the Lay Institute for Evangelism in 1959.[38]

He also affirmed this commitment to all CCC staff. In the 1974 copy of the *Campus Ministry Manual*, he stated, "Throughout the history of Campus Crusade for Christ, we have sought to work with all parts of the body of Christ. We have emphasized taking the role of a servant with the various groups and denominations in the spirit of being 'an arm of the Church.'"[39] In the same training manual, leadership laid out clear expectations for staff member involvement in local churches. Within ninety days of reporting to their assignment, staff were expected to join a church that sits "in the

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[35] Turner, *Bill Bright and Campus Crusade for Christ*, 44.

[36] Richardson, *Amazing Faith*, 70.

[37] Richardson, *Amazing Faith*, 79.

[38] This effort showed such promise that CCC launched a separate ministry called ChurchLIFE. Staff within this ministry of CCC had two priorities. "First, [they] assisted churches (pastor and laypeople) to develop discipleship ministries. Second, the staff developed movements of spiritual multiplication within leadership groups in the community." Bright, *Come Help Change the World*, 99.

[39] Campus Crusade for Christ, *Campus Ministry Manual: Sharing Christ on the College Campus* (San Bernadino, CA: CCCI, 1974), 575.

mainstream of biblical Christianity" and agrees with CCC in doctrine.[40] CCC wanted staff intimately connected to a church. Leadership expected staff members to take disciples with them and to encourage those disciples to become members.[41] They also expected staff members to become an "ideal church member" by attending regularly and offering to serve. Service looked like leading Sunday school classes, offering training in evangelism, follow-up, and discipleship, and taking people to do evangelism.[42]

Bright also stressed the importance of building relationships with local pastors for purposes other than financial giving. The manual instructed staff members to share what CCC was doing on campus and how God was working in their personal lives. They were to emphasize that CCC was not trying to compete. Bright believed that through regular communication and invitations to lead or participate in CCC events, relationships with local churches could be healthy and thriving.[43]

This view of the church came out in Bright's broader writings as well. In the first volume of one of his most well-known series, *The 10 Basic Steps toward Christian Maturity*, he said, "I am convinced that a proper understanding of the church and how it is to function as a local body is important if we are to be fruitful disciples for Christ."[44] He then offered a simple explanation about why believers should attend church. "The church," he reminded readers, "is the Body of Christ," and he exhorted believers to play their role in their local congregation. After guiding his readers through a biblical understanding of the composition, ordinances, and purposes of the church, Bright

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[40] Campus Crusade for Christ, *Campus Ministry Manual*, 596.

[41] This is an important point. CCC staff have always been intentional to take those who have trusted Christ to church with them.

[42] Campus Crusade for Christ, *Campus Ministry Manual*, 596–97.

[43] Campus Crusade for Christ, *Campus Ministry Manual*, 597–98.

[44] Bill Bright, "The Importance of the Church," Cru, accessed January 15, 2023, https://www.cru.org/us/en/train-and-grow/10-basic-steps/1-the-christian-adventure.6.html. This site is a condensed version that has been adapted from the original. "The Importance of the Church" is part of "Step 1: The Christian Adventure."

directed them toward applying these truths through active church involvement.

Out of all the *Ten Basic Steps*, however, this was one of only two times Bright directly encouraged believers toward church involvement. Most of his efforts were directed at the individual believer's Christian experience. He gave instruction in prayer, Bible intake, and holiness to individuals. Yet, how a believer lives and grows in the spiritual disciplines within the community of believers remained relatively unaddressed. Bright encouraged personal witnessing to share the gospel and to multiply spiritually. However, there was no mention of connecting new converts to a church. Giving, which he did not limit to money, was the only discipline he viewed corporately. He urged believers to be good stewards of their whole lives—bodies, time, talents, and possessions. He stated, "The church is composed of many individuals, each with his own special function to perform—and contribution to make—to the rest of the Body. I encourage you to identify your talents, and ask God to show you how to use them for His glory."[45]

Core DNA

The expectations for staff written in early manuals and the philosophies communicated in Bright's general writings remain consistent parts of Cru today. Making up the Core DNA of the organization—win, build, and send—they permeate every aspect of the organization and influence every decision.[46] Utilizing this simple plan helps safeguard the distinctives of Cru and ensures that Cru staff and students across the country and around the world have the same general experience. They are the North Star

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[45] Bill Bright, "Stewardship of Our Talents and Gifts," Cru, accessed January 15, 2023, https://www.cru.org/us/en/train-and-grow/10-basic-steps/8-giving.5.html. "Stewardship of Our Talents and Gifts" is part of "Step 8: The Christian and Giving."

[46] Most of Bright's writings have been adapted for use as training materials in Cru campus movements.

that keeps each staff member and student volunteer aligned and moving in the same direction.[47]

The practical application of each of these on a typical campus will be addressed briefly. Though discussed individually, it is important to note that they are not necessarily distinct functions. They are closely intertwined and happen simultaneously. Students are built in their faith, trained, and sent out to win others, who will then repeat the cycle of spiritual multiplication in the spirit of 2 Timothy 2:2.

Win

Evangelism serves as the touchstone of a Cru movement. Bright believed students, as the next generation of leaders, would go on to influence the rest of the world. Therefore, "the strategy was simple: reach the college campuses for Christ, and you will reach tomorrow's men and women of influence in all of society."[48] Accordingly, Cru sees college campuses as unique mission fields. "When you think of the mission fields of the world, which areas of the world or society do you think the most about? Africa? Asia? Skid row? The greatest mission field in all the world is the college campus. College students are not only the leaders of tomorrow, they are the leaders of today."[49] This view narrows the scope of work, allowing staff to focus their time and efforts within clearly defined boundaries. However, Cru also understands that campuses are not homogenous communities. A university environment is made up of multiple sub-cultures—athletes, honors students, ethnic groups, international students, the Greek system, dormitories, etc. To reach this diverse campus community, Cru has committed to creating movements

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[47] It is important to note that Cru is a multi-ministry organization. While Bright's original vision was to reach college campuses, Cru has since extended its influence into other areas. The following discussion about win, build, and send occurs within the campus ministry context. Any conclusions drawn will be based within that arena and may not be applicable to the other ministries under Cru's umbrella.

[48] Bright, *Come Help Change the World*, 15.

[49] Campus Crusade for Christ, *Campus Ministry Manual*, iii.

everywhere so that everyone knows someone who truly follows Jesus.

Students are exposed to this mindset early and often in their Cru experience. During an initial appointment with a new student, staff and student leaders are encouraged to share the gospel. This ensures that new students have a biblical understanding of the gospel, verifies whether they are trusting in the true gospel for salvation, and creates a baseline for moving forward in spiritual growth. As they become more involved in a movement, students are challenged to think about how they can directly be part of fulfilling the mission to reach the campus. While one-on-one appointments are the most personal, Cru utilizes a variety of formats to share the gospel, including weekly Bible studies and weekly large-group gatherings. Though occurring less frequently, campus plans usually involve at least one campus-wide outreach event per semester. Typically, these campus-wide events involve a call to respond using a response card. Staff and student leaders then follow up with those who indicated a decision to ensure a proper understanding of the gospel.

Knowing the challenges and obstacles to evangelism, Bright wrote prolifically about it in his efforts to equip and encourage believers. He commented, “I want to share a biblical plan that will enable you to be fruitful in your witness for our Lord wherever you are, wherever you go, and under all circumstances.”[50] Bright intended this plan to be simple and transferable. Thus, he developed a curriculum that explained his ideas in plain and practical terms. In it, he motivated Cru staff and students to sow broadly, initiate constantly, and bring people to a point of decision quickly. “Campus Crusade is committed to aggressive evangelism,” he wrote to staff. “Being aggressive involves the physical (going to them), the verbal (clearly sharing the message of Christ), and the volitional (seeking to evoke a willful response or decision concerning what has been communicated).” He clarified further, “Aggressive evangelism means to take the

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[50] Bill Bright, *How You Can Be a Fruitful Witness* (1971; repr., Orlando: New Life, 1995), 7.

offensive in manner, word or deed, but not to be offensive. It does not mean high pressure."[51] This same message has been adapted to say, "We need to go to people rather than wait for people to come to us. Going to people with the gospel is the most loving thing we can do."[52]

To aid in this process, Cru has developed numerous tools to share the gospel. Though some disagree with the wording or even the use of gospel tracts, these tools clearly present mankind's separation from God because of sin, the need for forgiveness through Christ's atoning work, and the fact that people must respond in faith. Individuals are led to a "point of decision," at the end of which they are given the chance to pray a prayer of faith.[53] Should a person indicate a decision for Christ through prayer, the presenter is trained to encourage them toward growth in their new faith.

The earliest version, *The Four Spiritual Laws*, has been adapted and repackaged in the years since its publication in 1965. Yet, after presenting the gospel message (God's Plan, Man's Problem, God's Provision, Our Response), each version maintains the same four-point framework: a call to respond, a prayer, a new believer's position in Christ, and suggestions for Christian growth. Each version also ends with a short paragraph explaining the importance of finding fellowship in a good church based on Hebrews 10:25. The back page of the booklet states, "Several logs burn brightly together, but put one aside on the cold hearth and the fire goes out. So it is with your relationship with other Christians. If you do not belong to a church, do not wait to be invited. Take the initiative; call the pastor of a nearby church where Christ is honored and

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[51] Campus Crusade for Christ, *Campus Ministry Manual*, 2.

[52] Cru, "The Compass: A Tool for Disciplers," accessed February 15, 2023, https://www.cru.org/us/en/train-and-grow/bible-studies/compass.html. See the "Initiative Evangelism" in the first semester of the section, "Communicate Your Faith."

[53] For further reading on asking people to pray a prayer like this, see J. D. Greear, *Stop Asking Jesus into Your Heart: How to Know for Sure You Are Saved* (Grand Rapids: B & H Books, 2013), and Paul Chitwood, "The Sinner's Prayer: An Historical and Theological Analysis" (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2001).

His Word is preached. Start this week, and make plans to attend."[54] This is helpful and necessary counsel, even if it leaves much to be said. However, it is understandably truncated, considering the context in which it happens. Ideally, a developed understanding of local church membership should happen through discipleship.[55]

Build

The natural result of conversion should be discipleship—to be discipled and to disciple others. Bright explained, "Our basic training methods are based on an essential biblical principle that Paul gave Timothy."[56] Bright is referring to 2 Timothy 2:2, in which Paul instructs his protégé, "And what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also." This process of spiritual multiplication is key to spreading the gospel and fulfilling the Great Commission (Matt 28:18–20). For that reason, Cru makes concerted efforts to build believers in their faith so they can be multiplying disciples.

However, Bright taught that to truly be a multiplying disciple and faithful witness required an understanding of the ministry of the Holy Spirit. For him, this concept was the key to an abundant spiritual life and fruitfulness in ministry. He derived his teaching from the Keswick model of sanctification. In his chapter on the subject, Robertson McQuilkin (1927–2016) explained that the Keswick view "seeks to provide a mediating and biblically balanced solution to the problem of subnormal Christian experience."[57] According to McQuilkin,

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[54] Bill Bright, *The Four Spiritual Laws* (1965; repr., Orlando: New Life, 1994), 15.

[55] For further evaluations of "The Four Spiritual Laws," see David Lynn Bell, "Tracts to Christ: An Evaluation of American Gospel Tracts" (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2005) and Travis Dean Fleming, "An Analysis of Bill Bright's Theology and Methodology of Evangelism and Discipleship" (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2006).

[56] Bright, *Come Help Change the World*, 95.

[57] J. Robertson McQuilkin, "The Keswick Perspective," in *Five Views on Sanctification*, ed. Stanley N. Gundry, Counterpoints (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987), 152.

> Scripture recognizes a basic difference among Christians. It distinguishes between carnal ("of the flesh") Christians, who behave like unconverted people, and spiritual Christians, whose life is dominated by the Spirit of God (1 Cor. 3:1–3). All Christians are indwelt by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:9), but some Christians are "filled with the Spirit." The Bible speaks of both immature (or retarded) Christians and of mature Christians (Heb. 5:11–6:3). More than exhibiting simply a difference in degree of growth, Christians' lives manifest qualitative differences: some Christians have a life pattern of defeat, whereas others have a life pattern of spiritual success.[58]

Bright was convinced that most Christians lived a subnormal Christian life of carnality.[59] For that reason, he wrote prolifically about the Spirit-filled life, and he developed a booklet similar to *The Four Spiritual Laws* called *Have You Made the Wonderful Discovery of the Spirit-filled Life?* to communicate the idea. He wrote, "Every day can be an exciting adventure for the Christian who knows the reality of being filled with the Holy Spirit and who lives constantly, moment by moment, under His gracious direction."[60] It was only in this condition that staff and students would be able to effectively reach their campus with the gospel effectively. "If some sinful attitude or action is hindering your fellowship with God, He cannot live and love through you, and you will not be a joyful Christian or a fruitful witness for Christ."[61] Alternatively, "being filled with the Spirit involves inviting the Holy Spirit to control and empower you—to enable you to live a holy and godly life and to make you a fruitful witness for him by faith."[62] This is the concept around which all those plans revolve. If students are to win others to Christ, they must understand the Spirit-filled life.[63]

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[58] McQuilkin, "The Keswick Perspective," 160.

[59] According to John Turner, "Since Bright estimated that 90 percent of American Christians lived 'defeated lives' and were not filled with the Spirit, Crusade looked beyond the campus and also viewed America's churches as a potential mission field." Turner, *Bill Bright and Campus Crusade for Christ*, 89.

[60] Bill Bright, *Have You Made the Wonderful Discovery of the Spirit-filled Life?* (1966; repr., Orlando, FL: NewLife, 2000), 2.

[61] Bright, *How You Can Be a Fruitful Witness*, 18.

[62] Bright, *How You Can Be a Fruitful Witness*, 21.

[63] For more information on Keswick theology, see Andrew David Naselli, *Let Go and Let God? A Survey and Analysis of Keswick Theology* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2010). For more information on the influence of Keswick theology on Cru, see Travis Fleming, "An Analysis of Bill Bright's Theology and Methodology of Evangelism and Discipleship."

The Spirit-filled life is shared just as often with believers as the gospel is with non-believers, but spiritual growth happens in other contexts as well. Staff members encourage students to quickly get involved in small group Bible studies that are led by either staff or student leaders. These groups, however, always gather with a purpose in mind and move toward a specific goal. First, they shrink the larger movement into a smaller community. Within them, Scripture is taught and, just as importantly, relationships form. Ultimately, leaders hope to identify potential disciples within those groups who will grow to lead other groups, multiplying across campus so that more students can hear the gospel. Bright explained,

> Jesus used a variety of methods and situations to build commitment into His disciples. It is evident that spending time with these men was priority in His ministry. While He was evangelizing the multitudes, He was also giving special time and attention to His chosen disciples. Our Lord knew well the necessity of developing faithful, committed men in order to see spiritual multiplication take place. It is from this perspective that the action group concept was born.[64]

Thus, action groups (small groups) in Cru are the "means to train and sustain committed multipliers for reaching the world."[65]

Send

From the beginning, Bright never intended training to be an end unto itself. Keeping in step with Christ's commission to his followers, Cru trains students to "go and make disciples" (Matt 28:19). Therefore, students are sent to reach the campus as a part of and in response to their training. In fact, "Experience has shown that effective learning takes place when there is opportunity to: learn content or concepts, attain practical experience, and evaluate and review the concepts from the viewpoint of practical, personal experience."[66] Thus, the entire purpose of winning and building is to continue

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[64] Campus Crusade for Christ, *Campus Ministry Manual*, 316.

[65] Campus Crusade for Christ, *Campus Ministry Manual*, 316.

[66] Campus Crusade for Christ, *Campus Ministry Manual*, 316.

the cycle by sending out laborers to win the campus for Christ through spiritual multiplication. As part of the action group model, leaders are further expected to take members with them on evangelistic appointments throughout the week. Exposure to ministry experiences solidifies the vision for reaching a campus and catalyzes growth of the movement.

This, however, is only one portion of Cru's goal. In forming the ministry, Bright always envisioned Cru's influence extending beyond the campus borders. "In the case of students, sending is twofold: (1) to their present campus surroundings as dedicated Christian students; and (2) to the world upon graduation, with a personal ministry through Campus Crusade for Christ, other Christian organizations, the church or chosen profession."[67] Therefore, the campus mission field has functioned as a proving ground to prepare students to take the gospel to their future spheres of influence. This long-range purpose has often been termed "100% sent" within the organization.

Cru consistently places this perspective before students through various means. For example, during Cru's annual Winter Conferences, students are given the chance to sign "the pledge."[68] In summary, this pledge is an opportunity for students to commit themselves to going where the Lord wants them to go, doing what the Lord wants them to do, saying what the Lord wants them to say, and giving what the Lord wants them to give. Essentially, it is a broad call for students to submit their lives to God's will, to invest in the Great Commission in small and large ways, to live a life of holiness, and to live a life of sacrifice for the sake of the gospel.

Each year hundreds of students take this pledge.[69] Many of them are

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[67] Campus Crusade for Christ, *Campus Ministry Manual*, v.

[68] "The Pledge" can be accessed at the following website: Cru, "What Is the Pledge?," accessed February 15, 2023, https://www.cru.org/us/en/pledge.html.

[69] Not much historical data is available. Internal (unpublished) numbers for 2013 show that 3,662 students (59 percent of attendees) took the pledge at the conferences. In 2015, a total of 3,403 students (28.6 percent of attendees) signed the pledge for the first time, and another 1,746 (14.7 percent of attendees) renewed a previous commitment. The most recent internal data shows that 844 students (31

committing to simple steps of obedience like sharing the gospel with a friend or family member. Others are committing to join a summer mission opportunity or an internship. Upon graduation, some choose to join Cru in vocational ministry as full-time staff, interns, or part-time staff.[70] Most, however, will leave college and pursue other careers. In line with Cru's historical commitment to prepare students to serve Christ in every vocation, the organization has developed mechanisms that work toward that end. For example, Cru uses a campaign called "The 5 Things" to help graduating seniors think strategically about stewarding their lives. They are encouraged to consider their Kingdom Vision, Team, Plan, Ongoing Equipping, and Coach (mentor).[71] A new campaign called "Flux" was launched in January 2023. Like "The 5 Things," this five-week online curriculum seeks to help students as they transition from college to the rest of life.

Evaluation

Approaching universities with a missionary mindset carries with it both benefits and consequences that reach far beyond a student's immediate experience, most notably in relation to Cru's emphases on win and send. It prompts the question, "Who would be most effective at reaching the campus community?" While staff members bring experience and availability, Cru believes college students are best equipped to reach their peers.[72] For that reason, the win, build, send model focuses primarily on the campus

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percent of attendees) signed the pledge in 2022. This decline results from two key factors. First, total attendance at the conferences has declined. Second, the most recent pledge was directed at a specific international opportunity.

[70] Though this number is relatively few, Bright compiled a lengthy and detailed process for challenging students to join Cru staff. See Campus Crusade for Christ, *Campus Ministry Manual*, 6–1526. Many of those principles are still practiced.

[71] Cru, "5 Things Resources," accessed February 15, 2023, https://www.cru.org/us/en/communities/campus/lifeonmission/5-things-resources.html.

[72] This is a commonly asked question among missiologists and mission agencies when it comes to reaching other people groups. Because it sees the campus as a mission field, Cru instinctively views college students as a unique "people group." For more information on reaching people groups, see Donald A. McGavran, "The Bridges of God," in *PWCM*, chap. 53, 4th ed. (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2009), Kindle.

context. As a result, Turner observes, "Crusade staff urged new converts to participate in evangelistic efforts as soon as possible, incorporated them into Bible studies, and urged them to memorize caches of Scripture verses."[73] Though students are encouraged to go to church and invite their peers, the depth of connection to a local church is often overshadowed by the pull to be more involved in reaching the campus as a member of their local Cru movement. This is one of the natural consequences of viewing the campus as a mission field.

On one hand, this model carries significant advantages. Cru's discipleship model is an immediate point of connection for believers. Upon entering college or upon making a profession of faith, students can quickly find a community. This community provides structure, purpose, and opportunity for spiritual growth. This is often crucial for the Christian student who enters college longing for such relationships but might feel lost in a sea of new opportunities. It is also crucial for the student who lacks a relationship with Christ and needs to hear a biblical perspective on Christianity. Cru students also receive intentional, life-changing training that equips them to clearly share the gospel and train others to do the same. They are taught to see the opportunities around them for gospel ministry and to take the initiative to act. Cru's network and infrastructure reach into nearly every nation and people group. As their hearts and minds are opened to the vast array of ways that God is working throughout the world to bring unbelievers into a relationship with him, students are shown how they can participate and are given the means to do it.

Unfortunately, this model also bears disadvantages. Win, build, and send are primarily done in-house by Cru staff and students.[74] Bright's action group model expects

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[73] Turner, *Bill Bright and Campus Crusade for Christ*, 67.

[74] The amount of local church involvement varies widely and depends on local campus leaders to initiate it and intentionally incorporate it into the campus plan.

students to be in a group, lead a group, and disciple other students.[75] This represents a hefty commitment for students who already devote time to classes, homework, and other activities, leaving very little, if any, time for church involvement. The level of involvement often asked of students creates a world insulated from church life, where a Cru movement functions as the primary source of spiritual growth and Christian community. When this is true, students and staff suffer. For example, they miss out on cross-generational relationships within the church. Not observing and learning from older saints who have walked with Christ for decades fosters a narrow view of the Christian life. Churches also suffer. When college students are unnecessarily segregated, the larger church body is deprived of the joy of investing in their lives and being enriched by them. The gap between these two realities often promotes competitive attitudes. Since the campus is their mission field, Cru staff understandably want students involved in the movement. Because local church involvement is the biblical expectation, churches rightly want students engaged in the life of the church. Where those two realities fail to align, tension and frustration can incubate.

As it regards Cru's efforts to build students, specifically, Keswick influences on Cru's model has yielded many positive results. Young believers across the world daily walk in the power of the Holy Spirit. They see their sanctification as a work of grace and not a result of human effort, and they desire to surrender their lives to the Lord's will. As a result, students continue to commit themselves to domestic ministry and international missions. Yet, this influence also raises questions and hazards a few potential risks. Scholars are divided about the theological underpinnings surrounding the term "carnal Christian." Some fear it creates two classes of Christians. In his response to McQuilkin, Anthony Hoekema agreed that Scripture makes numerous distinctions regarding mankind's spiritual states and clearly describes progressive growth for believers. Yet he

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[75] Campus Crusade for Christ, *Campus Ministry Manual*, 324.

concluded, “There is no biblical basis for the distinction between ‘carnal’ and ‘spiritual’ Christians. [Scripture] never speaks of a third class of people called ‘carnal Christians.’”[76] Hoekema continued by warning that creating this new category would lead to “two erroneous and spiritually harmful attitudes: depression and discouragement on the part of the ‘lower class’ of believers; pride or possible complacency on the part of the ‘upper class.’”[77] These are legitimate concerns that have also been leveled against Cru and Bright.[78] However, not everyone believes this was Bright’s intent in formulating and communicating his beliefs regarding the Spirit-filled life. R. C. Sproul concluded, “On the surface it appears as if Dr. Bright was teaching an absolute distinction between two kinds of Christians. I am confident, however, that this was not the intention of the booklet or of its author. In a pastoral way, Dr. Bright was discussing the classical struggle between the flesh and the spirit that every genuine Christian faces.”[79] Sproul went on to say, “All Christians are ‘carnal’ insofar as we continue to struggle with the old nature of

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[76] Anthony A. Hoekema, “Response to McQuilkin,” in Gundry, *Five Views on Sanctification*, 189.

[77] Hoekema, “Response to McQuilkin,” 189. See also Andreas J. Köstenberger, “What Does It Mean to Be Filled with the Spirit? A Biblical Investigation,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 40, no. 2 (June 1997), 229–40. In this article, Köstenberger offers helpful insight into the biblical idea of “filling.” He also provides a much-needed correction to the overly individualistic perspective on Christian growth by centering it in the community of the church.

[78] Another theological concern often raised regarding the Spirit-filled life is the belief that Christians must experience a second blessing of the Spirit. Wesleyans, for instance, advocate for the doctrine of “entire sanctification.” According to Laurence Wood, “Sanctification begins at the moment of the new birth; entire sanctification is the experience of being made perfect in love.” Laurence O. Wood, “The Wesleyan View,” in *Christian Spirituality: Five Views of Sanctification,* ed. Donald L. Alexander (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 96. In referencing Wesley’s conclusions regarding a second blessing, Wood says, “Normally one receives the gift of perfect love subsequent to the new birth and often prior to death” (97). Similarly, Pentecostals also hold to a second blessing. Russell Spittler states, “The oldest form of classical Pentecostalism . . . clung steadfastly to its established notion of sanctification as a ‘second definite work’—a post-conversional, cleansing experience that enhanced personal holiness and, according to some, radically removed the bent to sin.” Russell P. Spittler, “The Pentecostal View,” in Alexander, *Christian Spirituality: Five Views of Sanctification*, 136). Neither Bright nor Cru espouse the doctrine of a second blessing. Cru’s Statement of Faith says, “The Holy Spirit has come into the world to reveal and glorify Christ and to apply the saving work of Christ to individuals. He convicts and draws sinners to Christ, imparts new life to them, continually indwells them from the moment of spiritual birth and seals them until the day of redemption. His fullness, power and control are appropriated in the believer’s life by faith.” Cru, “Statement of Faith,” accessed March 13, 2023, https://www.cru.org/us/en/about/statement-of-faith.html.

[79] R. C. Sproul, *Pleasing God*, 2nd ed. (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2012), 137.

flesh. But no true Christian is carnal in the sense that the flesh totally dominates his or her life. If the carnal aspect were in total control, we would know that we are still unregenerate."[80] Bright also made this distinction in his booklet: "The individual who professes to be a Christian but who continues to practice sin should realize that he may not be a Christian at all, according to 1 John 2:3; 3:6–9; Ephesians 5:5."[81] Even so, if Bright and McQuilkin are correct, and subnormal, carnal Christianity truly dominates within the church, then the church becomes a potentially dangerous place for believers. At the very least, it makes the church ineffectual in its calling as the means of grace God has given his people to exercise and strengthen their gifts. This is the soil in which an overly individualized Christianity grows and one in which the church is no longer needed (and possibly avoided) for discipleship.[82]

Conclusion

The work begun by Bill and Vonette Bright in 1951 continues to bear fruit on college campuses across the world. Their simple model of win, build, and send has helped thousands of believers grow spiritually and serve the kingdom. Yet, it comes with a cost. How will this impact them long term? How does it shape their view of the local church, its authority in their lives, and their involvement in it post college? Chapter 4 seeks to address these questions by exploring the effect of Cru's philosophies on how students relate to the local church.

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[80] Sproul, *Pleasing God*, 137.

[81] Bright, *Have You Made the Wonderful Discovery of the Spirit-filled Life?*, 7.

[82] In fact, Bright arrived at this conclusion when he called the American church impotent.

CHAPTER 4

AN EXAMINATION OF RECENT STUDIES ABOUT THE LOCAL CHURCH'S ROLE IN A CRU INTERN'S LIFE AND MINISTRY

Historically, Cru has sought to partner well with churches in discipling students and tried to maintain appropriate boundaries. Cru's 1974 *Campus Ministry Manual* instructed staff, "After we have taken our students through the basic steps of discipleship, then we need to get them into a local church. Ask pastors to teach doctrine while we stick to the basics."[1] In describing discipleship, the manual stated, "God has ordained the church to be a place for building disciples and bringing Christians together for fellowship, unity and Christian love. Hebrews 10:25 tells us that we are not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together; therefore, a Christian needs to be a member of a local church which honors Christ and faithfully teaches God's Word."[2] However, tensions have remained with local church leaders throughout the organization's history, raising questions regarding how well students get connected and involved in local churches and regarding sending students to the mission field.[3]

The arguments rising on both sides of the issue often focus on anecdotal information or subjective perspectives. Much of the confusion or conflict might be eliminated through the availability of more objective information. Therefore, this chapter seeks to accomplish two primary goals. First, it will examine data from two recent

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[1] Campus Crusade for Christ, *Campus Ministry Manual: Sharing Christ on the College Campus* (San Bernadino, CA: CCCI, 1974), viii.

[2] Campus Crusade for Christ, *Campus Ministry Manual*, 87.

[3] Not all tensions that exist between Cru and local churches are the result of students not being well-connected. Doctrinal differences create rifts at times. At other times, tensions rise because some church or denominational leaders believe that parachurch organizations should not exist at all. The questions surrounding student involvement in local churches are only a part of the issue.

studies. The first study, conducted in 2004, analyzed the factors that motivated students at that time to enter vocational Christian service with Cru. The second study targeted those who have served as international interns with Cru by gathering data regarding involvement in the local church as college students and while serving overseas. Second, this chapter will identify important implications from these studies that must be addressed regarding the calling and care of international interns who serve with Cru.

Examining Recent Research

In his 2005 dissertation, Thomas Weakley undertook the task of examining why college students enter vocational Christian service (VCS) with Cru. His research provides a helpful backdrop to understanding what students typically experience within Cru's culture of sending, especially in terms of their call to ministry. "Besides the sense of a clear Calling of God upon the individual's life," he queried, "are there recognizable influence factors that tend to be consistently present in the experience of those persons who have answered the call to enter into vocational Christian service?"[4] The concept of "calling" is the underlying premise of Weakley's work, and he rooted his understanding and working definition of calling in the biblical narrative. He observed calling both corporately and individually in the Old and New Testaments. Yet he noted, "Although there is a corporate aspect of calling in the New Testament . . . the greater sense of calling is upon an individual's life," and he categorized this into two broad categories—salvation and service.[5]

Defining "calling," however, poses its own unique problems. Weakley attributed potential confusion to a few key factors. First, it can be difficult to differentiate between the general call to all believers to engage in ministry and the unique call for

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[4] Thomas W. Weakley, "An Analysis of Factors That Motivate Campus Crusade for Christ Staff to Enter Vocational Christian Service" (EdD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2005), 3.

[5] Weakley, "An Analysis of Factors," 16.

those who enter vocational ministry.[6] Nonetheless, Weakley concluded, "The need of a calling from God is crucial."[7] Second, confusion exists around the nature of the call. On the one hand, it is rare that "an individual would have a miraculous or cataclysmic type call."[8] On the other hand, while special callings do not need to be audible, they are not based on purely objective means.

To bring clarity, Weakley suggested two ideas. First, those in ministry will often enter VCS based on both personal preferences and a unique sense of calling. Second, calls into ministry tend to happen progressively. He concluded, "As individuals understand that a Pauline calling is not necessary, they become much more comfortable and patient in the process."[9] In the end, Weakley summarized his research on calling by concluding, "Any true calling to the ministry must come from God. Still, each person must recognize God's leading in his or her life through his or her unique circumstances and God's timing."[10]

By conducting this study, Weakley sought to offer tangible explanations to the intangible idea of a "special calling" and define what feels indefinable. What value can there be in identifying a person's motivation for ministry? Weakley believed that "one's motive for ministry has great impact upon his enjoyment, fulfillment, tenure, and even success."[11] For this research, he identified and analyzed four areas of influence: theological, relational, mentoring, and ministry experiences.[12] Why these four? First,

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[6] Weakley, "An Analysis of Factors," 18.

[7] Weakley, "An Analysis of Factors," 20.

[8] Weakley, "An Analysis of Factors," 23.

[9] Weakley, "An Analysis of Factors," 24.

[10] Weakley, "An Analysis of Factors," 25.

[11] Weakley, "An Analysis of Factors," 26.

[12] Weakley, "An Analysis of Factors," 4–5. The research instrument was conducted with Cru's new staff class in the summer of 2004.

VCS involves communicating the nature of God and how he relates to mankind. Therefore, it is a deeply theological occupation. Weakley wrote, "Theological convictions play a major role in one's motivation to enter vocational Christian service" and "must be developed over time to sustain a life-time [*sic*] of ministry."[13] Second, relationships sit at the core of human existence. In the beginning, God created mankind to be in relationship with him and with one another. A person's well-being, therefore, is in large part a function of relationships and their influence. Weakley examined parental, peer, and church relationships and sought "to explore if these three . . . inform one's decision to consider vocational Christian service."[14] Third, some relationships stand apart from others in terms of intensity. "Although a parent or friend may be a type of mentor, often mentors are other significant individuals who invest in ones [*sic*] life."[15] The significance and form of these relationships will differ throughout a person's life. At times, the mentor might be older, and the relationship functions like a parent to a child. At other times, the mentoring relationship might be more peer-to-peer. Weakley also identified "three broad categories called Intensive (Active) mentoring, Occasional mentoring, and Passive mentoring."[16] For his research, Weakley hypothesized that "mentoring is viewed as a significant contributor, influencing one's call to enter vocational Christian service."[17] Lastly, the experiences in which one participates greatly sway one's decisions. "When one is confronted with the task of making a vocational decision and with retrospection looks back over very satisfying ministry experiences," Weakley wrote, "he may conclude

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[13] Weakley, "An Analysis of Factors," 27.

[14] Weakley, "An Analysis of Factors," 36. In Weakley's survey, these were further divided into six distinct categories: current church, small group, peers, parents, mentors, and professional ministers.

[15] Weakley, "An Analysis of Factors," 42.

[16] Weakley, "An Analysis of Factors," 46. These categories come from Paul D. Stanley and J. Robert Clinton, *Connecting: The Mentoring Relationships You Need to Succeed in Life* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1992).

[17] Weakley, "An Analysis of Factors," 55.

that vocational Christian service must be considered."[18] This is a natural component in the calling process and should not be diminished or ignored. It also fits with Weakley's conclusion that calling is progressive rather than sudden. Ministry experiences generally occur over time and allow potential workers to evaluate their calling.

Weakley's research showed that new Cru staff that year ranked theological reasons as the most influential overall factors.[19] Though theological beliefs cannot be ignored, this chapter focuses on the other three factors since they deal more with how and with whom students spend their time. Respondents that year selected ministry experiences as the second most significant factor behind theological factors.[20] Unsurprisingly, the research revealed that missionaries who have joined an organization typically have had some level of involvement with that organization. For most of the Cru staff who took this survey, direct ministry experiences like leading a Bible study or attending a summer mission opportunity had a significant influence. Interestingly, serving internationally, especially as an international intern, ranked highest among all ministry experiences.[21] These new staff placed mentoring relationships third.[22] As Weakley observed, "The role of mentoring cannot be overstated. All of the precedent literature as well as the current study communicated the significant role that mentors play in one's life."[23] In this case, though, the source of mentoring mattered. "If more students were mentored by CCC staff," Weakley noted, "more individuals would go into VCS through

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[18] Weakley, "An Analysis of Factors," 57.

[19] Weakley analyzed six theological factors. Respondents ranked them in the following order: eternal perspective, the Great Commission, the lostness of man, spiritual calling, the lordship of Christ, and stewardship of life.

[20] Weakley, "An Analysis of Factors," 143.

[21] Weakley, "An Analysis of Factors," 157.

[22] Weakley's results showed a statistically significant difference between the first two factors and the final two.

[23] Weakley, "An Analysis of Factors," 154.

the ministry of CCC."[24] Relationships ranked the lowest out of all four categories that Weakley analyzed.[25] Casual observation seems to show that out of the six relationships examined, "current church" and "professional minister" relationships ranked significantly lower than mentors, peers, and small groups. Weakley's research showed that these relationships have much less bearing on a student's decision to join staff with Cru.[26]

To summarize Weakley's findings, students highly involved with Cru, especially those who took on leadership roles with "success," were much more likely to join Cru vocationally.[27] Those who were highly involved also tended to be mentored directly by Cru staff, another key factor in a student's decision to join Cru. This high level of participation for students involved with Cru naturally created a distance between them and their local church, resulting in churches and church leadership having little influence on a student's decision to join Cru staff. Though likely unintended, this rift was out of step with the historical pattern.

Earlier in his dissertation, Weakley stated, "The calling is to ministry, thus it needs to be confirmed within the context of ministry in the body of Christ."[28] He continued, "Historically, the inner call to ministry was often confirmed by the outward call from a church. [Gilbert] Bailey communicated that one should have the judgment of his church, or of its wisest and best members on whether they think it is one's duty to enter vocational service."[29] Yet, according to the data collected, those who entered VCS with Cru appear to value counsel from church leadership the least. This contradicts

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[24] Weakley, "An Analysis of Factors," 155.

[25] This does not mean relationships were inconsequential, only that they ranked behind the other three.

[26] Weakley, "An Analysis of Factors," 138.

[27] Seeing success in ministry was ranked significantly higher for females.

[28] Weakley, "An Analysis of Factors," 41.

[29] Weakley, "An Analysis of Factors," 41. Weakley referred to a work by Gilbert S. Bailey (1822–1891) titled *A Call to the Ministry*, *A Call to the Ministry* (Chicago: Church and Goodman, n.d.).

historical trends and falls much more along the lines of the modern perspectives outlined in chapter 2.[30] Again, this is not entirely surprising. As chapter 3 noted, Cru's Campus Ministry sees universities as a mission field and creates a narrow scope of ministry for its staff. This outlook is passed along to involved students. To help them steward their lives well, students are trained by Cru staff to limit their target audience to their peers and professors on campus. They are encouraged to believe God has providentially placed them on their campus, in their dormitories, and in specific classes for a purpose. Cru leadership wants students to make the most of those opportunities in the limited time they have been given during college.

Examining Current Research

A more recent study shows trends similar to those described in Weakley's research as it pertains to which relationships most influence Cru students.[31] A survey was conducted with international interns who served with Cru at least one year, beginning in August 2021 through July 2023.[32] This survey was developed to analyze an international intern's involvement with Cru as a student and how that possibly impacted his or her relationship to the local church. Further, it examined how those collegiate experiences and attitudes potentially influenced the intern's ministry overseas. The data in this study was collected through a quantitative survey that requested responses to both categorical and numerical items. For the numerical data, respondents were asked to give their opinion using a five-point Likert scale.

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[30] Weakley acknowledged this disconnect and offered helpful counsel: "Encourage a greater participation in ones [*sic*] church, and encourage a student to minister in their home/local church one summer." Weakley, "An Analysis of Factors," PowerPoint presentation, slide 44.

[31] This study is not intended to be viewed as a replication of Weakley's research since it neither utilized his methodology nor sought to answer the same research questions.

[32] Sixty-five interns completed this survey. Some of them served a one-year term, and some served a two-year term during this timeframe.

Categorical Data

This study surveyed sixty-five of Cru's international interns. The following figures represent the various categorical data collected in the survey. Respondents were asked to identify their gender, the average number of hours per week they served with Cru, in which US geography they attended school, whether they were a member of their sending church, and in which area of the world they serve.[33] For most survey items, n = 65.[34]

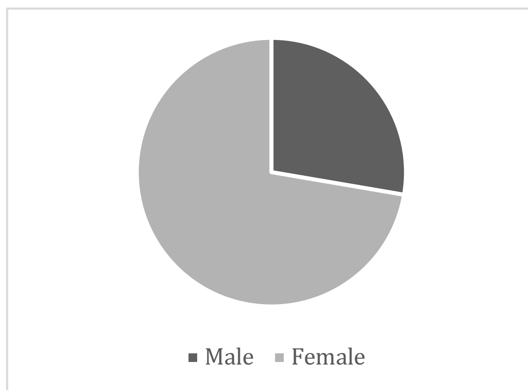

Figure 1. Results for gender

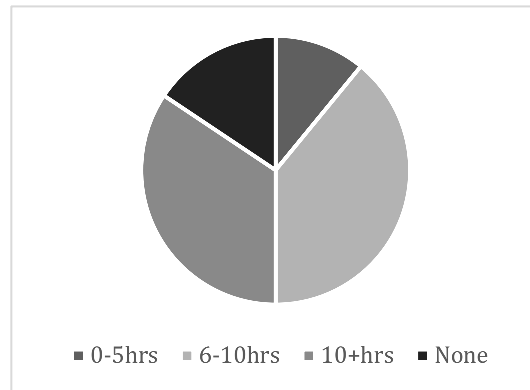

Figure 2. Results for estimated hours served per week

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[33] See appendix 3 for Cru's Campus Ministry geographical divisions in the United States. For organizational purposes, Cru segments its international efforts into seven areas of the world: Latin America/Caribbean (LAC), Europe, Africa, North Africa/Middle East (NAME), Persian/Armenian/Central Asian/Turkic (PACT), East Asia, and Greater Asia/Pacific (GAP). Currently, Cru does not send US laborers to East Asia.

[34] One intern did not indicate the number of hours served with Cru. For that item, n = 64.

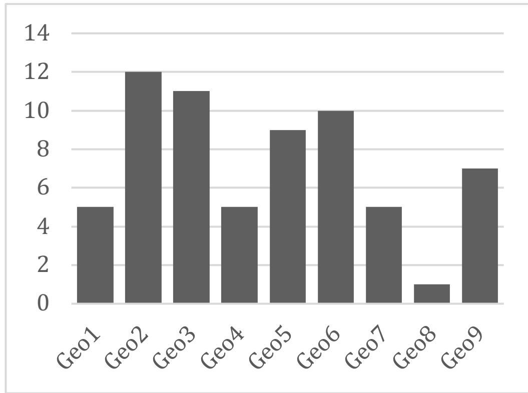

Figure 3. Results for US geography

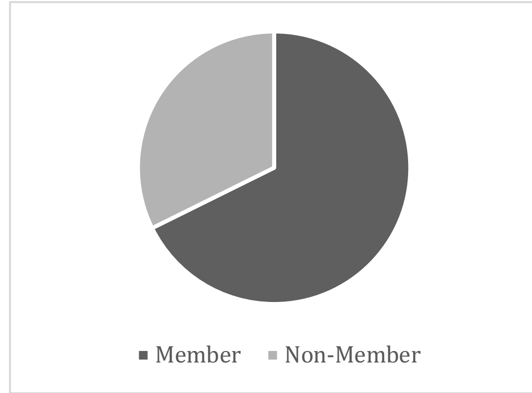

Figure 4. Results for sending church membership

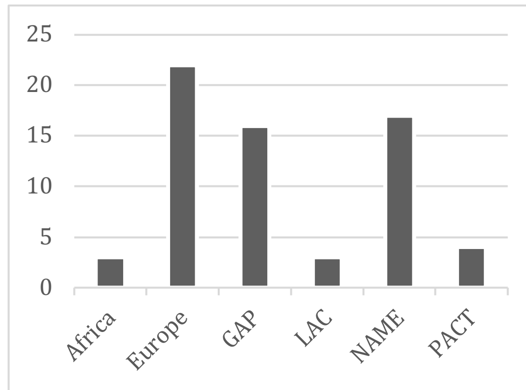

Figure 5. Results for area of the world

Chi-Square Tests for Independence

For this study, the null hypothesis assumed that no significant difference existed between what was observed and what was expected regarding the categorical data collected. To determine if this hypothesis held true, chi-square tests for independence were conducted on seven paired variables of categorical data. The risk level was set at .05. In other words, the study tested whether the observed data would differ by more or less than 5 percent than what was expected. To find the results, the p-value was calculated using Excel. For any pairing with a p-value less than 5 percent, the null hypothesis would

be rejected, verifying that one variable was dependent on the other. Table 1 represents the results of those tests.

Table 1. Results of chi-square tests for independence

Pairings	p-value
Gender & US Geography	0.250
Gender & Area of World	0.019
Gender & Hours Served	0.160
Gender & Membership	0.480
US Geography & Hours Served	0.230
US Geography & Membership	0.500
Hours Served & Membership	0.310

As noted in the table, almost every chi-square test shows that these variables are independent of one another. The only exception exists between gender and the area of the world in which the intern served. This test resulted in a p-value of .019. Since the p-value for this test fell below the .05 significance level set for the analysis, this study shows that where an intern chose to serve overseas was related to that intern's gender. This knowledge potentially impacts the way Cru recruits missionaries to serve in different areas of the world. However, drastic changes to recruiting tactics should not be based on this survey alone. To determine whether these results are an anomaly limited to this sample, historical data from Cru could be analyzed.

One-Sample T-Test

This survey did not involve a pre-test and post-test. Therefore, a *t*-test to identify what changes might have occurred over the course of time could not be

conducted. However, a one-sample *t*-test was administered using Excel.[35] This test analyzed the total scores for each participant to determine whether a significant difference existed between the sample mean and the sample median.[36] The following table presents those results.

Table 2. Results of one sample *t*-test

	Value
Sample Mean	57.670
Sample Median	57
Sample StDev	10.990
H_0: Mean and Median are not significantly different	
H_1: Mean and Median are significantly different.	
Sample Size	45
df	44
Alpha	0.05
T Stat	0.407
T Critical	–1.680
P Value Two-Tail	0.686

Based on both the p-value and the *t*-scores, the null hypothesis should be accepted. There is no significant difference between the mean and median for this data set. Therefore, it appears that this sample represents the population.

The Relationship between Sending Churches and Their Missionaries

Chapter 2 of this thesis discussed a biblical perspective on being "sent." The

[35] Since not every respondent answered each item, this test only examined those surveys for which each item had an answer. As a result, n = 45.

[36] Because the population mean is unknown, the sample mean was compared to the sample median.

biblical model offered supported at least four principles for sending missionaries. First, potential missionaries should be known well enough that a local church can affirm their calling. Second, churches should maintain a measure of authority in the life of a missionary they send. Third, since a church holds authority, it is fair for them to place certain expectations upon the missionaries they send. Finally, those missionaries remain accountable to their sending churches. These four principles generally fall into two broad categories. First, the principles of being known and living under church authority are intertwined with how missionaries are called to ministry. Second, the principles of expectations and accountability are related to how missionaries receive care on the field.[37]

Using two types of interval data, this section presents key findings from this survey in relation to these two categories and what they appear to imply about an intern's experience with Cru during college and while serving overseas. First, it considers the mean and standard deviation from select survey items that suggest certain perspectives toward the local church. Second, it demonstrates correlations that exist between certain survey items and what they might signify.

Calling

Part 2 of the survey asked respondents to give their opinion about their relationship to the local church during college. The following table shows those results.

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[37] The principle of authority straddles both these categories in some regard. For the sake of this paper, church authority is considered an aspect of calling even though it undergirds the principles of care.

Table 3. Results for items related to "calling"

Survey Item	Mean	Std Dev
Personally Valued Church Membership	4.00	1.00
Cru Staff Encouraged Church Membership	3.87	0.97
Served at Church	3.44	1.41
Cru Staff Encouraged Service at Church	3.24	1.09
Church Leader Had Significant Role in Spiritual Dev	3.22	1.40
Cru Staff Encouraged Spiritual Dev by Church Leaders	3.64	1.05
Felt Well-Known by Church Leaders	3.33	1.38
Met Regularly with a Church Leader	2.51	1.38
Sought Input from Church Leader	2.56	1.36

Along with other parachurch organizations, Cru has been criticized for neglecting to emphasize the importance of the local church. Past practices and writings have at times warranted this critique. However, this survey appears to demonstrate that most international interns in this sample personally valued church membership. They also agreed that Cru staff encouraged membership in a local church. Yet, the data also appears to show a disconnect. While most were members of their sending church and a large number served at their church, the numbers began to decrease in items that gauged increased engagement in the local church. Fewer students believed a church leader played a significant role in their spiritual development or felt well-known by a church leader. Even less met with a church leader regularly or sought input from a church leader about interning with Cru. This could indicate that even though a student valued membership, they did not see their decision to intern with Cru as an issue of church authority connected to their membership.

To test the relationship between these items, a correlation analysis was run

using Excel. The following matrix provides the results.[38] For this analysis, a strong positive correlation ranged from 0.60 to 1.00. A moderate positive correlation ranged from 0.30 to 0.59. A weak positive correlation fell between 0 and 0.29.

Table 4. Correlation matrix for items related to “calling”

	Pers Valued Mem	Cru Enc Mem	Served at Church	Cru Enc Service	CL Sig Role in SD	Cru Enc CL in SD	Well-Known by CL	Met with CL	Input from CL
Pers Valued Mem	1.00								
Cru Enc Mem	0.68	1.00							
Served at Church	0.66	0.36	1.00						
Cru Enc Service	0.56	0.61	0.59	1.00					
CL Sig Role in SD	0.70	0.41	0.71	0.50	1.00				
Cru Enc CL in SD	0.59	0.69	0.33	0.61	0.41	1.00			
Well-Known by CL	0.64	0.37	0.65	0.44	0.68	0.37	1.00		
Met with CL	0.54	0.29	0.57	0.47	0.74	0.34	0.68	1.00	
Input from CL	0.55	0.27	0.61	0.31	0.72	0.27	0.63	0.69	1.00

Several important observations can be made from this data. First, personally valuing membership in a local church had strong correlations with serving at church, seeing a church leader as playing a significant role in spiritual development, and feeling well-known by a church leader. When students served in their local church, they saw church leaders as playing a significant role, felt well-known by church leaders, and sought input from church leaders about interning with Cru. The strongest correlations

[38] This test was only conducted on the 45 fully completed surveys.

surfaced when a church leader played a significant role in a student's spiritual development. In those cases, this sample of interns felt well-known, met regularly with church leaders, and sought input. In summary, when students engrain themselves in the life of the church, it appears that they more faithfully live out the biblical principles of calling; they are both well-known and look to church leaders to help them make decisions.

Care

In part 3 of the survey, respondents gave their opinions about their relationship with the local church while serving overseas.[39] Table 5 shows those results.

Table 5. Results for items related to "care"

Survey Item	Mean	Std Dev
Sending Church Responsible to Maintain Relationship	3.78	0.93
Accountable to Sending Church	3.64	1.03
Discussed Ministry with Sending Church	2.87	1.29
Sending Church Resp for Spiritual Well-Being	2.80	0.94
Spoke with Sending Church about Spiritual Well-Being	2.22	1.02
Cru Expected a Local Church Connection	4.31	0.97
Int'l Team Leader Encouraged Local Church Connection	4.16	1.00
Actively Involved in a Local Church	4.07	1.05

The data from this section of the survey offers helpful insight into the opinions interns held about their relationship to the local church. On the one hand, interns believed

[39] These items covered two categories of relationship. The first five items reflect how they related to their sending church. The last three items indicate how they related to the local church in their international city. The difference was made clear on the survey.

at a relatively high level that their sending church had a responsibility to maintain a relationship with them and that they were accountable to their sending church. However, the numbers decreased when they considered how that played out practically. They ranked discussing ministry responsibilities with their sending church, thinking their sending church held a responsibility for their spiritual well-being, and speaking with their church about their spiritual well-being at a lower rate. Like the previous section of the survey, this decrease exposes a potential disconnect between what they believe should be true and what they experience. At the same time, the data reveals a strong sense of connection to a local church in their international city. Feeling involved and connected to a church in their city could account for a lack of connection to their sending church.

As before, a correlation analysis using Excel tested for possible relationships between the items in this section of the survey. The same correlation ranges used in the previous analysis have been applied to the results for this section, with the addition of a weak negative correlation falling between 0 and –0.29. The following correlation matrix shows those results.

Table 6. Correlation matrix for items related to "care"

	SC Resp for Rel	Acct to SC	Disc Min w/ SC	SC Resp for WB	Spoke w/ SC abt WB	Cru Exp LC Conn	Int'l TL Enc LC Inv	Actv Inv in LC
SC Resp for Rel	1.00							
Acct to SC	0.39	1.00						
Disc Min w/ SC	0.41	0.46	1.00					
SC Resp for WB	0.49	0.46	0.16	1.00				
Spoke w/ SC abt WB	0.41	0.25	0.73	0.19	1.00			
Cru Exp LC Conn	–0.17	0.27	0.11	0.14	0.04	1.00		
Int'l TL Enc LC Inv	–0.13	0.08	0.12	0.08	–0.01	0.72	1.00	
Actv Inv in LC	–0.05	0.11	–0.04	0.31	0.07	0.69	0.66	1.00

A few notable observations can be made from this matrix pertaining to receiving care from their sending church. When interns believed their sending church had a responsibility to maintain a relationship with them while overseas, they were more likely to interact with their church regarding their ministry and spiritual well-being. When they saw themselves as accountable to their church, they were more likely to discuss their ministry and believe their church was responsible for their spiritual well-being. The strongest correlation in this section occurred between discussing ministry and spiritual well-being with sending churches. Other strong correlations appeared in the final three items. Interns are most likely to be actively involved in a local church in their international city when it is expected organizationally and encouraged by team leaders. Two points summarize this section. First, when sending churches maintain a relationship, interns are more likely to discuss key aspects of life and ministry, thus engaging in the biblical principles of care. Second, Cru's organizational influence greatly impacts whether interns engage with a local church in their city while overseas.

Connecting Calling and Care

A final important factor to consider is how the attitudes and beliefs students hold during college relate to their attitudes and beliefs while serving overseas. The following matrix represents the correlations that exist between those items.

Table 7. Correlation matrix for "calling" and "care"

	Pers Valued Mem	Cru Enc Mem	Served at Church	Cru Enc Service	CL Sig Role in SD	Cru Enc CL in SD	Well-Known by CL	Met with CL	Input from CL
SC Resp for Rel	0.15	0.17	0.29	0.23	0.18	–0.11	0.13	0.13	0.17
Acct to SC	0.00	0.18	0.11	0.06	0.14	0.15	0.07	0.15	0.24
Disc Min w/ SC	0.05	0.29	0.10	0.28	0.17	0.10	0.22	0.29	0.17
SC Resp for WB	0.19	0.09	0.15	0.14	0.29	0.20	0.26	0.26	0.25
Spoke w/ SC abt WB	0.04	0.10	0.26	0.13	0.20	–0.05	0.32	0.29	0.24
Cru Exp LC Conn	0.00	0.17	–0.15	–0.09	0.07	0.33	–0.06	0.03	0.18
Int'l TL Enc LC Inv	0.07	0.21	–0.11	–0.04	0.11	0.29	0.06	0.07	0.20
Actv Inv in LC	0.22	0.19	0.04	–0.07	0.13	0.27	0.02	0.02	0.23

This data appears to reflect a stark contrast between what students believe about their sending church's involvement during the calling process and what they believe about the care they receive from their sending church as an intern. For example, personally valuing church membership during college did not make them more likely to maintain an ongoing relationship to their sending church while serving overseas. In fact, it does not appear that close alignment with a church in any category during college made an intern more likely to stay engaged with their sending church. This might be due to their active involvement in a local church in their international city, but more research would need to be conducted to determine what factors contribute to this. One noteworthy data point seems to show that interns who feel well-known by church leaders during college are more likely speak to someone at their sending church about their spiritual well-being. However, it barely crosses into the low end of the moderate range.

Conclusion

This study reveals some encouraging results. The interns in this sample do value church membership and believe Cru staff encourage it. They are well-connected to the local church in their international cities. Yet, there are some connections that need to be strengthened so students can live out the biblical principles of calling and care through meaningful church membership. The next chapter will offer practical suggestions for growth and make recommendations for further study.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ESTABLISHING HEALTHY PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN CRU AND THE LOCAL CHURCH

The data introduced in the previous chapter offered helpful and encouraging insight into how Cru's international interns view their relationship to their sending churches. At the same time, obvious gaps exist between how interns relate to their sending churches before departure and how they interact while on the field. These gaps can be traced back to perspectives about church membership, specifically around the four principles of sending: being known, authority, expectations, and accountability.

This chapter seeks to root the partnership between the church and parachurch within the soil of the local church by briefly summarizing a biblical view of church membership. Next it will point to key data from the previously examined study that should be considered through a series of regression tests. Finally, it will map out a potential path forward for Cru, students considering an international internship, and sending churches.

Meaningful Membership

Before parachurch groups developed, the task of sending missionaries originated as a function of the church. Jesus commissioned his followers to "make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Matt 28:19–20). As the good news spread, Christ's followers gathered in local congregations. Churches eventually began to send out their own as missionaries to fulfill their Lord's command, and these workers were not strangers to those who sent them. Paul and

Barnabas led in the church at Antioch (Acts 13:1–3). Timothy was already a disciple and "well spoken of by the brothers" (Acts 16:1–2). These men and others like them were held accountable for the ministry they undertook so that false teachers could be distinguished from those who taught the truth (2 Tim 4:3–5; 2 John 7).

The advent of parachurch groups has blurred the lines between churches and mission agencies. Neither being known by church leaders nor being accountable to a sending church are prerequisites for going on the mission field. Though an agency like Cru might inquire about church membership, failing to join a church would not necessarily be grounds for rejecting an application or dismissing an employee. The greater emphasis is placed on an individual's personal character and sense of calling.

This, however, does not change the fact that the principles of calling and care are intricately woven into the fabric of church membership, which naturally raises important questions. What does it mean to be a church member? Why should someone be a church member? What impact should that have on those who want to be missionaries?

Scripture regularly refers to God's people in the singular. One of the most prominent pictures in the New Testament is that of a bride (Eph 5; Rev 19: 21–22).[1] Paul further expounds the origins of a unified entity in his letter to the Ephesians. In chapter 2, he illustrates the desperate condition of the Gentiles: "separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world" (Eph 2:12). However, Christ's blood transformed their position. God brought them near, became their peace, and made them one with his people by destroying the dividing wall of hostility "that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross" (2:13–16). As they remember Christ's work, Paul exhorts them

[1] The Old Testament utilizes this image as well (e.g., Isa 61:10; 62:5; Jer 2). Other descriptions include Israel as a son (Exod 4:22–23) or as a daughter (e.g., Isa 37:22; 52:2; 62:11).

to “walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which [they] have been called” (4:1). This manner of life should be characterized by “humility and all gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (4:2–3).

Yet, this unity does not eliminate diversity among the constituent parts. Therefore, Scripture uses other images to describe the relational realities that exist in the church—a body (1 Cor 12:12–31), a household (Eph 2:19; 1 Pet 4:17), a flock of sheep (John 10:1–18), and a building/temple (Eph 2:20–22), among others. They represent a plurality of members coming together as a single unit. Though distinct, each of these images bears common characteristics, which shed further light on how this unified diversity should be lived out to the full within a local congregation.

To maintain the integrity of a local church, membership must be clearly defined and well-guarded. Jonathan Leeman comments, “The local church guards the reputation of Christ by sorting out the true professors from the false.”[2] This mutually benefits all involved. The four images (mentioned above) to describe the church bring definition to this. A body is a unified whole, and its boundaries are clearly marked. When a person’s body is injured, treating another person will not bring healing to the one in need. A household is a unique unit of people intimately related to one another. A husband should not seek intimacy with a woman other than his wife. Nor should a parent try to discipline another family’s child. A flock of sheep belongs to one shepherd. Shepherds know their sheep and do not try to care for another’s flock. When membership remains unguarded, sheep from other flocks will wander in and out of churches, as will wolves. When membership lacks boundaries, individual sheep who stray find themselves in grave danger, and members of another family walk into churches believing they belong.

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[2] Jonathan Leeman, *Church Membership: How the World Knows Who Represents Jesus*, 9Marks: Building Healthy Churches (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 30.

Well-defined and well-guarded boundaries not only mark off the church externally, they also establish expectations for the internal, interdependent workings of a local congregation. Each body part is uniquely designed to fulfill its function. When one part is injured, the body will not work properly. Each member of a family unit has a responsibility to actively know and care for the other members. A child's waywardness impacts the whole household. Lost sheep diminish the flock. The components of a building actively support each other to maintain the whole structure. However, missing blocks in a building compromise the stability of the entire framework. For the body to be whole, for a family to be complete, and for a structure to be sound, each individual component must be healthy, present, and engaged. Passive attendees and stray sheep cannot work for the good of the whole, nor can they benefit from the growth, encouragement, and accountability offered by the whole.

It is no surprise, then, that the Bible uses covenantal language to explain the commitment, responsibility, and accountability individuals should exercise regarding their relationship to the whole. People who join a church "willingly give themselves—submit themselves—to a local church."[3] Potential missionaries should begin their pursuit of ministry from this biblical perspective of membership.

Regression Tests

The previous chapter highlighted multiple key areas of interest that need to be explored further in the relationship between Cru and the local church. Specifically, can any of the survey items predict the response of other survey items? Having this information will allow Cru, students considering internships, and sending churches to determine the degree to which they are operating under the biblical principles of calling and care. It will help those involved in the calling and care roles lay aside assumptions

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[3] Leeman, *Church Membership*, 31.

about the calling and care of interns. Finally, it will reveal areas of weakness that must be addressed. To find this information, several regression tests were conducted in Excel to check for a relationship between predictor variables and response variables.

Calling

Calling to the mission field involves both being known and seeing the sending church as having authority, which, as noted above, implies meaningful membership. Since most respondents ranked valuing membership highly and indicated they were members of their sending church, it would be easy to assume that they also practiced those values. Therefore, it makes sense to ask how well that item predicts other items. In the area of calling, personally valuing membership reasonably predicted three other items: whether students served at church, whether a church leader played a significant role in a student's spiritual development, and whether students felt well-known by church leaders. In those three items, personally valuing membership in a church influenced nearly 50 percent of the responses. It also had a modest influence on whether a student met regularly with a church leader and sought input from a church leader about interning with Cru. The following figure demonstrates those results.[4]

[4] Figure 6 and those that follow show the trendlines for each data set compared to the predictor variable. The legend provides the Coefficient of Determination (R^2) for each color-coded trendline.

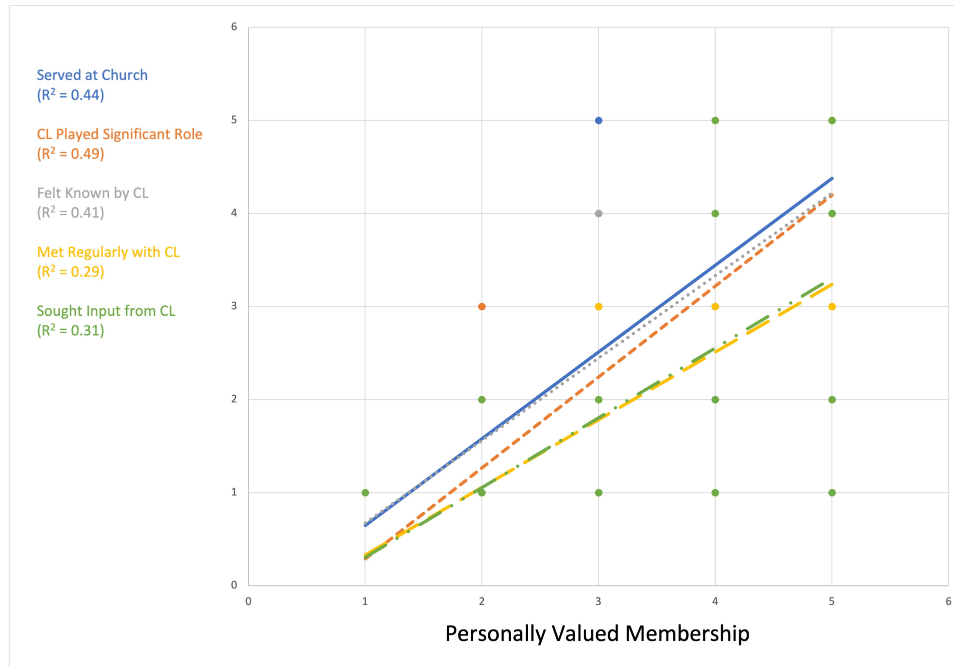

Figure 6. Results for "Personally Valued Membership"
and items related to calling

From these tests, it appears that a high value on church membership reliably predicts deeper engagement with the life of the church. In fact, the confidence level of students living out the principles of sending increases the more involved they become in a church. The following figures show the results of regression tests conducted on items related to increased involvement.

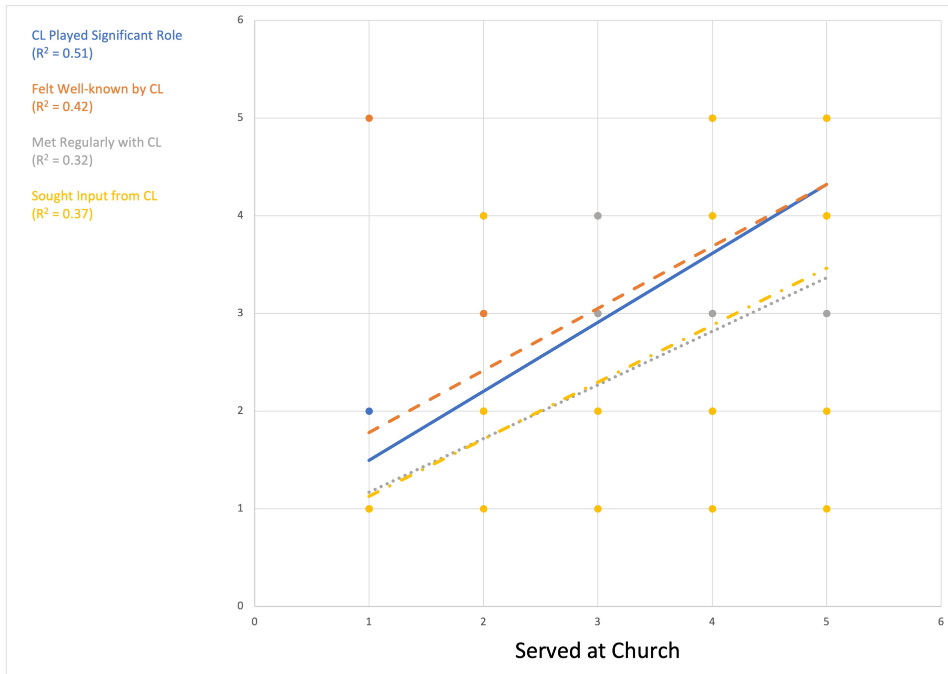

Figure 7. Results for "Served at Church" and items related to calling

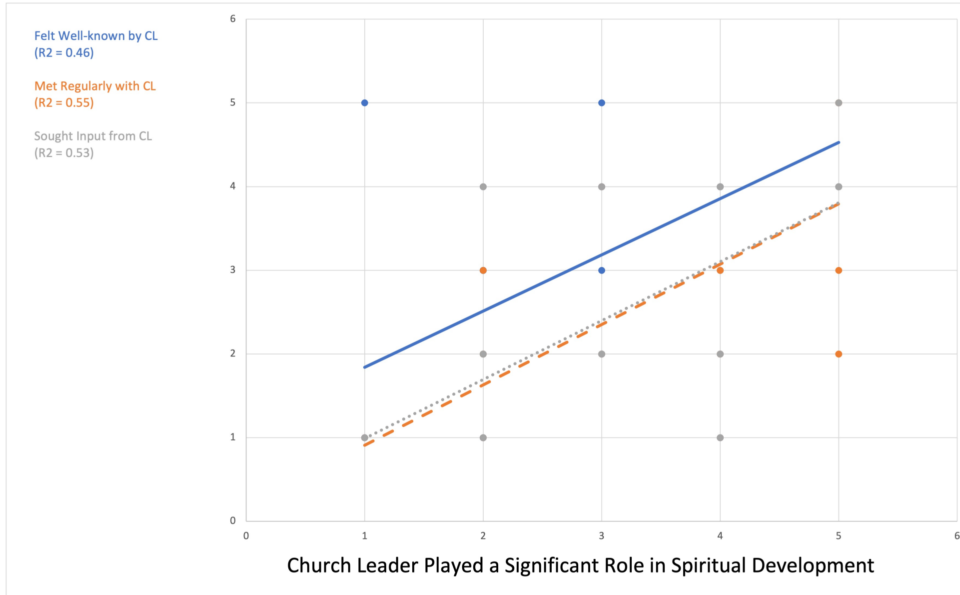

Figure 8. Results for "Church Leader Played a Significant Role in Spiritual Development" and items related to calling

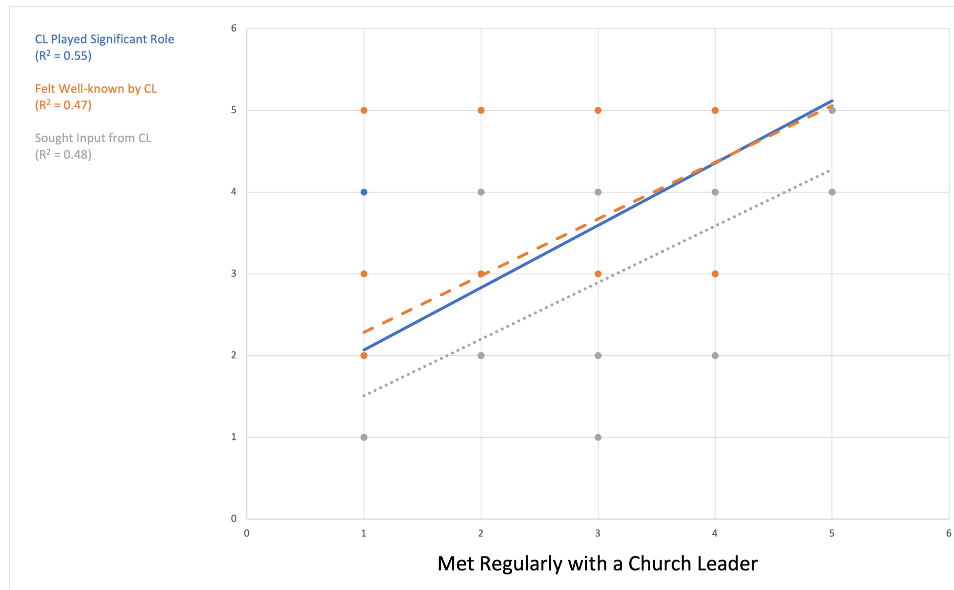

Figure 9. Results for "Met Regularly with a Church Leader"
and items related to calling

The data represented in the figures above shows that placing a personal value on membership is a good starting point when it comes to predicting whether a student will be aligned to the biblical principles of sending. However, students who are most engaged in the local church are also more likely to follow the biblical principles of sending in their calling to the mission field.

What does the data say about the role Cru staff play in this relationship? The matrices presented in chapter 4 showed moderate correlations between the encouragement Cru staff offered and items related to greater church engagement. To what degree are those items able to predict responses from students? To assess what type of influence Cru staff have on students, regression tests were conducted on related items from the survey. The following figures present those results.

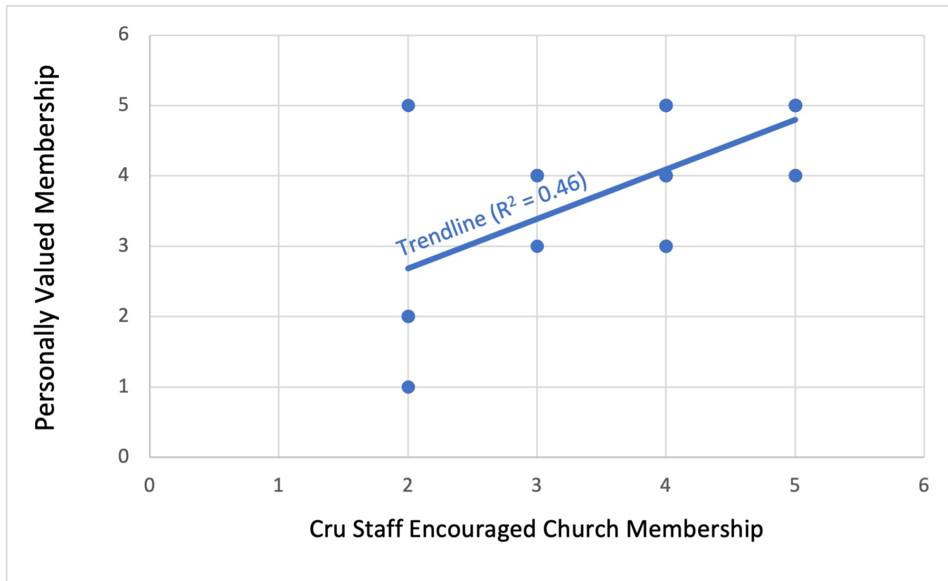

Figure 10. Results for "Cru Staff Encouraged Church Membership" and "Personally Valued Membership"

Figure 11. Results for "Cru Staff Encouraged Service" and "Served at Church"

Based on this data, encouragement from Cru staff to join and to serve at church holds at least some predictive power. A possible conclusion would be that this influence from Cru staff members also results in deeper engagement. After all, the fact that a student personally valued church membership reasonably predicted more church involvement. However, this does not seem to be the case. Regression tests show that encouragement from Cru staff to join a church does not reliably predict further involvement. In fact, even encouragement from Cru staff to be spiritually developed in the local church could not predict whether that would happen. The following figures show those trends.

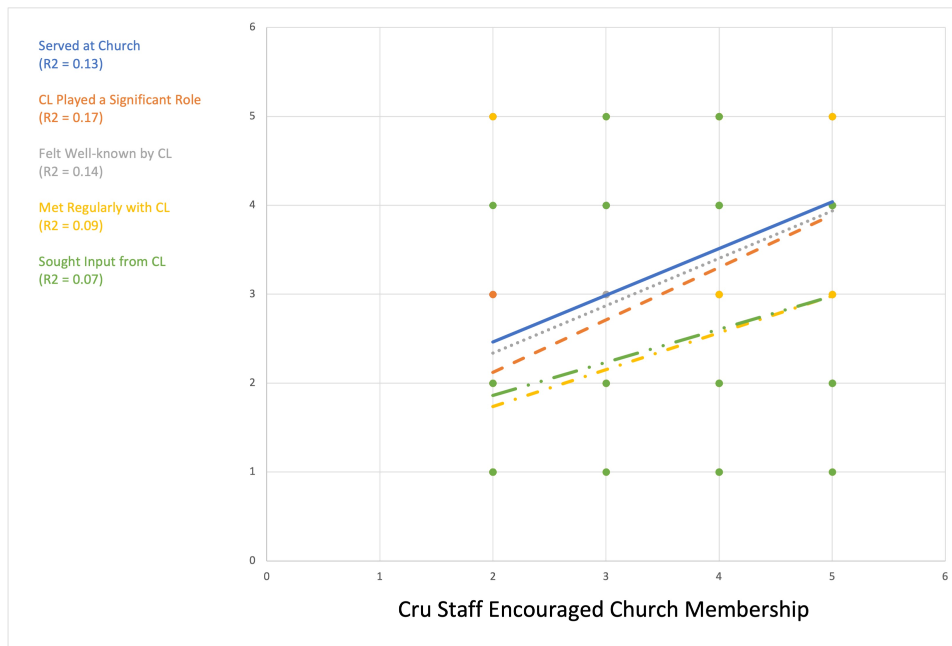

Figure 12. Results for "Cru Staff Encouraged Church Membership" and items related to calling

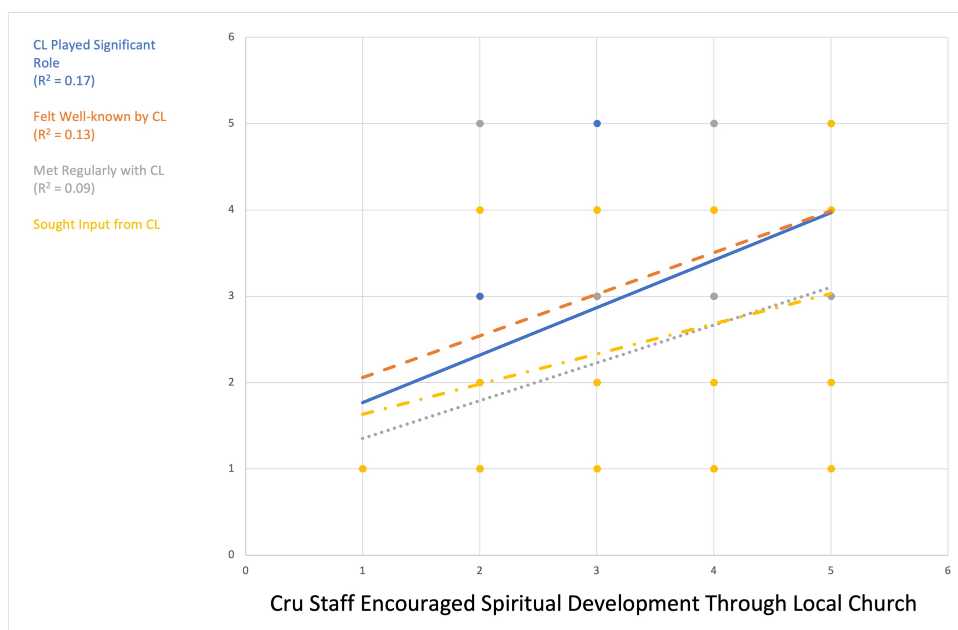

Figure 13. Results for "Cru Staff Encouraged Spiritual Development through Local Church" and items related to calling

As a result of this data, Cru staff need to consider the degree to which encouragement about church involvement influences a student's response. They cannot assume that their instruction to engage in a local church will be practiced fully and faithfully. When a student places a value on church membership and then gets more involved in church life, that motivation does not appear to be a result of a Cru staff member's influence. Instead, it appears to be the result of deeper held convictions that come from another source.

Care

The previous section analyzed predictor variables in the calling of students to serve as international interns with Cru. This section examines whether any of the survey items can predict responses to aspects of an intern's care while living overseas.

Since valuing membership predicted responses to key items about local church engagement, one might assume it would be a reliable predictor of sending church engagement while serving overseas. However, that does not appear to be the case. Just

because students value church membership in college, this does not predict how they will engage with their sending church. In fact, even church leaders playing a significant role in their lives and seeking input before going did not predict if interns would continue to engage with their sending church in a meaningful way. The following figures show the trendlines and R^2 values for those items.

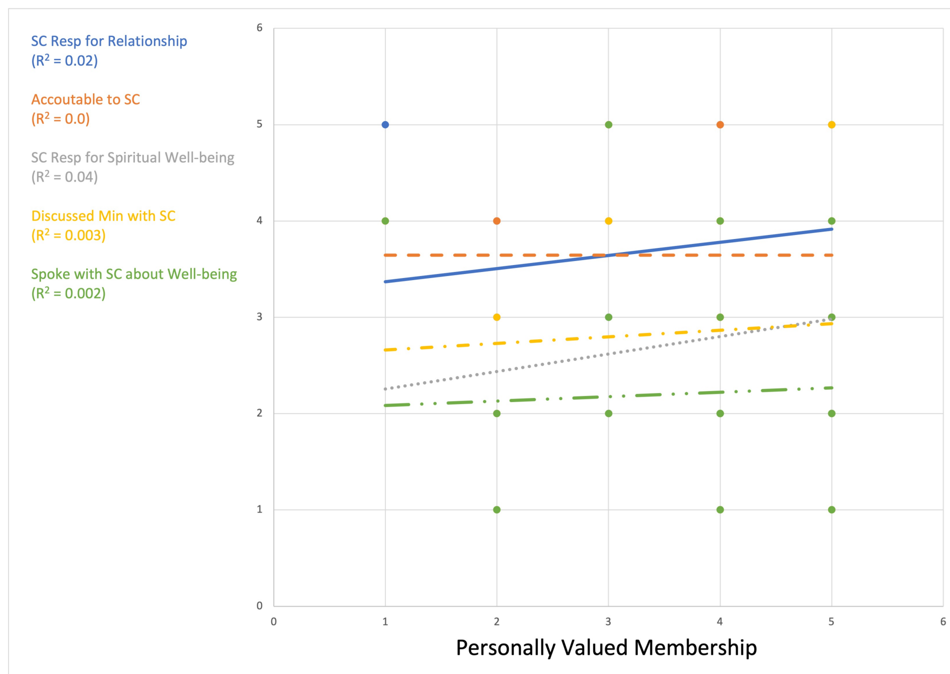

Figure 14. Results for "Personally Valued Membership"
and items related to care

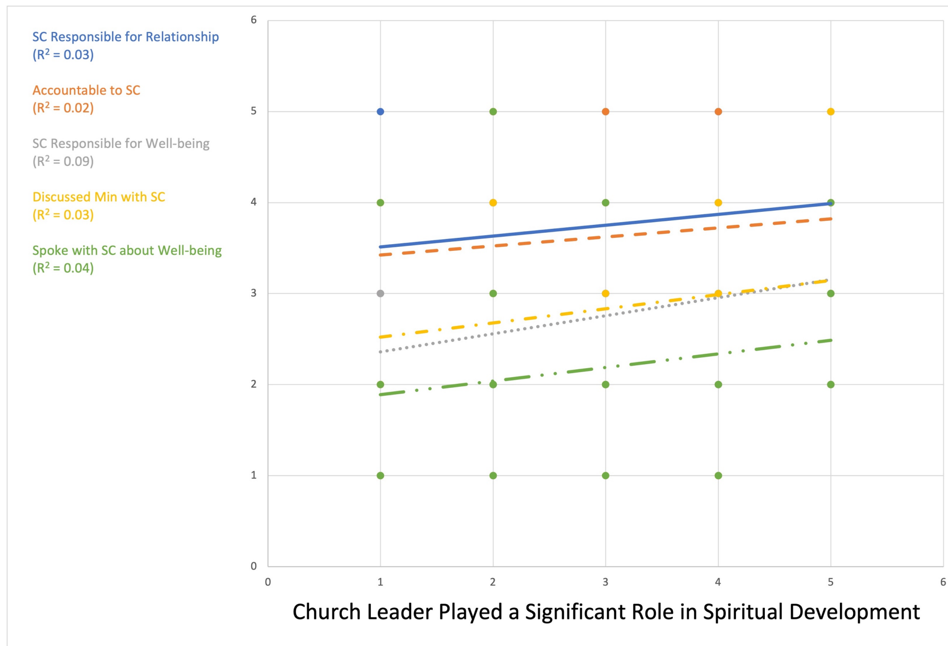

Figure 15. Results for "Church Leader Played a Significant Role in Spiritual Development" and items related to care

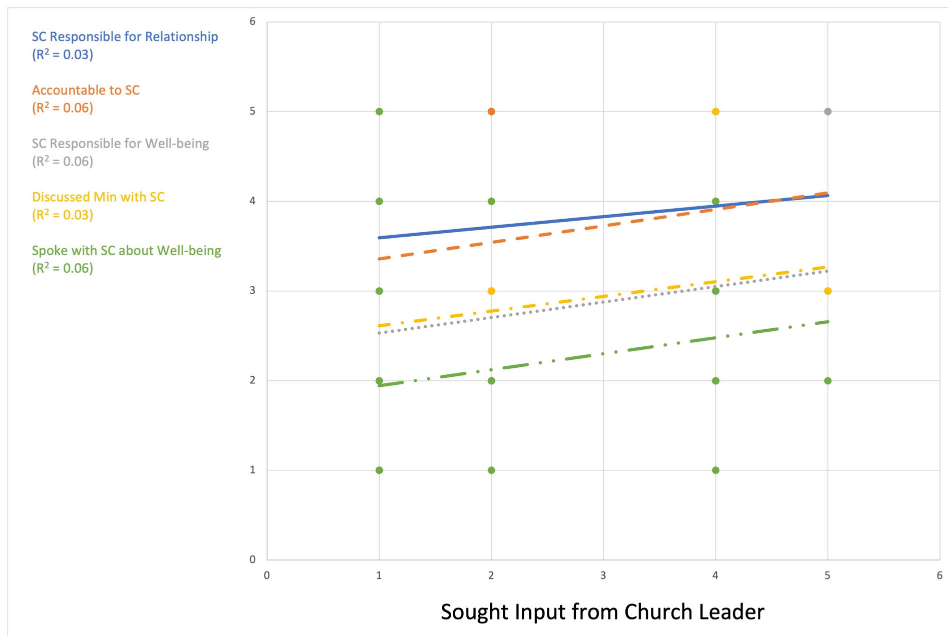

Figure 16. Results for "Sought Input from Church Leader" and items related to care

In response to this data, both Cru staff and church leaders should be wary of placing too much stock in these items as reliable predictors of future beliefs and attitudes once interns reach the mission field.[5] It should also lead them to ask more questions: What must change in an intern's understanding of sending church engagement? What can Cru and sending churches do to bridge this gap? The next section will offer some suggestions for Cru staff, students, and church leaders.

The Four Principles in Practice

Scripture is a missionary story. Even before sin entered the world, Bradley Bell observes, "God commissioned, or sent, Adam and Eve into Eden to 'fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over [it]' (Genesis 1:28)."[6] Woven into every story after that is God's plan to bring his people back to him. He called Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He called Moses and established Israel to be a light to the nations. From its inception, the New Testament church continued that thread and sent emissaries to spread the good news. "God's pattern of sending," Bell concludes, "will continue until we reach the end of the story, where there won't just be a garden of two, but a city of countless worshipers."[7] To bring form to the function, the Bible offers the church four foundational principles for sending missionaries. First, a potential missionary should be known in the church. Second, the sending church holds authority in the calling process and retains a measure of authority after the missionary leaves. Third, the sending church has a right to hold expectations upon the missionary's work. Finally, the missionary remains accountable in some sense to the sending church. As New Testament scholar Patrick

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[5] As noted in chapter 4, the data shows that interns on the field ranked active involvement with a church in their international city very highly. Correlation tests also showed a strong relationship between what both Cru and their international team leaders expect and an intern's active involvement in their international city. If interns feel connected to a church internationally, this might account for interns not staying connected to their sending church.

[6] Bradley Bell, *The Sending Church Defined* (Knoxville, TN: Upstream Collective, 2020), 21.

[7] Bell, *The Sending Church Defined*, 22.

Schreiner notes, "Paul was still tied into the local congregation of Antioch. He was not a rogue missionary who had no connection to a headquarter church."[8] This remains true for today's missionaries.

Though the church should take the lead role, sending agencies still hold an important place. They allow the church to extend its reach into areas that might otherwise take longer to reach. They provide infrastructure and resources that might be difficult for a church to develop on its own. However, parachurch missionary organizations must function within the form described by Scripture. They are a servant to the church—a bridesmaid to the bride. John Hammett, professor of systematic theology at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, states, "The service of the parachurch as an arm of the church must exist within a context of partnership, for either total domination by the church or total independence by the parachurch is destructive of a proper balance of authority and freedom."[9] Navigating this relationship has proven to be a greater challenge in the last century. Wesley Willmer, J. David Schmidt, and Martyn Smith write, "It is estimated that parachurch organizations have grown more than a hundredfold in [the twentieth] century. This proliferation is viewed with alarm by some and guarded delight by others."[10] Because parachurch groups proliferate in the evangelical landscape, healthy collaboration must happen for the church's missionary efforts to succeed.

The data from the study examined earlier in this chapter and in chapter 4 revealed gaps and obstacles, but it also presented encouraging realities that left plenty of room to chart a clear path ahead. Moving forward together will require trust, cooperation, and communication. To do that well, each of the three parties in the relationship needs to

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[8] Patrick Schreiner, *Acts*, Christian Standard Commentary (Nashville: Holman Reference, 2021), 409.

[9] John S. Hammett, "How Church and Parachurch Should Relate: Arguments for a Servant-Partnership Model," in *Missiology: An International Review* 28, no. 2 (April 2000), 201.

[10] Wesley K. Willmer and J. David Schmidt, with Martyn Smith, preface to *The Prospering Parachurch: Enlarging the Boundaries of God's Kingdom* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998), xii.

be considered. Recommendations for improvement in the calling and care of international interns are provided below.

Recommendations for Cru

In one sense, Cru as an organization bears the greater responsibility in strengthening its partnerships with local churches. Steve Beirn comments, "The trend in missions today is to place the individual at the center of the process."[11] This has caused some to query, "Are churches really sending, or are missionaries simply going?"[12] As the outside, secondary agency seeking to partner with the church for Kingdom work, Cru must be part of correcting this trend by prioritizing unity in the relationship. However, unity does not form in a void. As discussed above, unity grows in community, though not in a haphazard community. It must be intentional and covenantal. To develop this type of community and to partner well with local churches, staff members must practice healthy, biblical church membership. Yet as noted in the survey data with interns, Cru cannot assume its staff value church membership only because they are compelled to join a church as an aspect of their employment. Cru staff must be trained to develop a biblically and theologically robust perspective on the church.[13] This will be for their own benefit. Staff should then partner with churches who not only share their ministry values but also share doctrinal values about the nature and role of the local church.

Once Cru staff have well-formed perspectives on ecclesiology, they will be

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[11] Steve Beirn with George W. Murray, introduction to *Well Sent: Reimagining the Church's Missionary-Sending Process* (Fort Washington, PA: CLC, 2015), 17.

[12] Beirn and Murray, *Well Sent*, 88.

[13] Cru staff are expected to complete eleven courses through Cru's Institute of Biblical Studies as part of their theological development. Two of those courses focus on areas in systematic theology: "God, Bible, Holy Spirit" and "Humanity, Christ, Salvation." Each of these courses touches on key issues of life and ministry. Neither of them goes into great depth about ecclesiology. As an inter-denominational organization, Cru might be hesitant to make clear statements about the church. Unfortunately, the absence of clear teaching runs the risk of reducing the importance of membership. This is a mistake. For their own spiritual well-being, Cru staff need to be theologically sound in all matters of the faith, including ecclesiology. This will not only allow them to practice biblical membership for their own sake, but it will also serve as a model for the students they lead.

better equipped to converse with students about the value of church membership. Rather than casually talking about it or making it a condition for leadership in the movement, staff can teach and encourage students from a position of biblical conviction and practice. When staff model biblical membership, they can place involvement and spiritual development in a local church as an expectation on students. This requires two important efforts from Cru staff. First, they must resist the temptation to compete with local churches for the time and attention of students. Second, staff must make concerted efforts to create margin in student schedules to facilitate involvement in a local church. When these two things occur, meaningful church engagement becomes a natural part of Cru's discipleship strategy to build students. It normalizes questions like, "Who do you know at church? In what ways are you serving? Who are you meeting with regularly? In what ways is your church developing you spiritually?" When students consider interning, staff can then ask, "With which church leaders have you discussed your plans? What do they think about it?" Church leaders and students will recognize the openness and willingness to cooperate, and it will foster longer-lasting and healthier church partnerships.

Cru's responsibility to partner with churches does not stop once an intern graduates and boards a plane for the field. In many ways, the need for intentionality on Cru's part increases. As a sending agency and employer, Cru naturally takes on a high level of responsibility for the training, care, and support of its interns. This, coupled with being physically distant from the sending churches, may leave many churches feeling like there is little need for them to take responsibility, so they relinquish their obligations. Those church leaders who do want to preserve their biblical expectations may feel pushed to the side, unable to engage with those they have sent. In response, Cru staff need to recognize and validate the ongoing relationship interns need to have with their sending churches. It begins by widening the circle of influence in three key areas.

First, Cru could place greater emphasis on church engagement in the intern application process. Questions about church involvement could probe more deeply and

pastoral references could be required. Second, Cru staff who function as International Sending Coordinators (ISC) could platform interns' relationships with their sending churches.[14] This would not require a massive shift in practice or philosophy, either. Instead, it would involve micro-shifts such as ISCs intentionally asking sending-church related questions during care calls, and interns being encouraged to have regular conversations with church leaders, not just their ISC or other Cru leaders. Leaders from partnering churches could also be invited to join ISCs on care trips or take on roles at training conferences. Third, Cru could seek input from church leaders about the sending and care of interns. As an established organization, Cru possesses a well-organized and efficient infrastructure for sending missionaries, which appeals to prospective missionaries and the churches who send them. However, Cru can still learn and grow. Advice from trusted partners would help alleviate blind spots, cultivate healthy relationships, and allow sending churches to operate according to their biblical mandates.[15]

Recommendations for Future Interns

Church membership is a gift. Too often it is seen as either a helpful suggestion or a burden one must bear as part of Christian duty. Nonetheless, membership is a good gift to God's people. Though students might feel the pressure of school, relationships, and the cares of life, they need to gather regularly with God's people in a local church. The college years are typically formative for students. They gain new independence, tackle new responsibilities, and form new habits. While few decisions in life are determinative, those made during these years usually have a lasting impact. Involvement in a campus

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[14] International Sending Coordinators work as the primary point of contact in the US for international interns. ISCs shepherd the experience of Cru's international staff and interns from the point of international interest until returning to the US.

[15] It would be misleading to imply that Cru never seeks input from outside advisors. However, greater care could be given to specific activities like the sending process.

ministry offers numerous benefits and experiences. For most students, even those who intern with Cru, their campus ministry experience has an expiration date. However, church membership remains a lifelong endeavor, even for those who continue to serve with Cru. Developing a proper relationship with the church during college establishes healthy patterns and perspectives for later in life.

Though all college students should pursue meaningful membership, those considering vocational ministry should take great care to know and practice the four principles of sending.[16] In his book *Here to There*, David Meade says, "Many young missionary candidates, with surging eagerness to hurry to the field, short circuit or neglect involving their home (sending) church early in the process."[17] During college, therefore, students should strive to be well-known and recognize the authority of their spiritual shepherds. This demands more than passive, irregular attendance. Being known within the church and by its leaders requires a significant investment. It certainly means being present. More than that, it means being fully engaged, which requires time. As with anything else, students should prioritize their time by creating enough margin in life to joyfully serve in their church. Serving in ministry while in college is a good indicator of a student's gifts, ministry interests, and capabilities. It is difficult to imagine a potential missionary who is not actively engaged in ministry before applying to serve overseas. Therefore, as Meade notes, "The most essential step toward the mission field is developing the ministry skills in and through a local church setting that you'll need on the field."[18] This commitment will help leaders and mentors identify whether those who

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[16] Even if college students do not move their membership while at school, this does not release them from purposeful involvement. Many churches understand this and offer meaningful opportunities to become part of the local church community.

[17] David Meade, *Here to There: How to Get to Your Mission Field*, rev. ed. (Newnan, GA: Propempo International, 2016), 18.

[18] Meade, *Here to There*, 29. In his book, Meade emphasizes church planting ministries. Those who are working in a different ministry might need to develop skills through an organization alongside those developed in a local church setting. The point here is that serving in a church is a key means by which church leaders will observe a student in ministry and gauge ministry readiness.

desire to serve as missionaries possess the traits necessary for overseas service. As they observe students in life and ministry, leaders can determine character traits like the potential missionary's reliability, humility, teachability, and initiative. With this knowledge, church leaders can affirm and confirm a student's maturity, spiritual growth, and readiness for ministry. At the same time, potential interns should take the initiative to seek approval from their church leaders, rather than make the decision alone.

Once students become interns and depart for their assignment, they must maintain a relationship with their sending church. Even if they become members of a church overseas, they are still accountable to their sending church to some degree. This could be as simple as a regular report of their ministry through a letter. This method can be helpful and encouraging, but ideally, the connection will be more personal. Like any relationship, true partnership in the mission needs to be more intimate than a letter. While overseas, interns should take full advantage of the support base they established as students. They should invite their sending churches into their life and ministry. Initiate phone calls. Ask for advice. Coordinate visits in cooperation with the sending agency. In doing so, they apply the biblical principles of sending.

Recommendations for Sending Churches

Parachurch groups like Cru must take responsibility to initiate healthy, biblical partnerships with local churches. At the same time, churches must realize that parachurch groups have often operated in response to a perceived vacuum and a belief that they can fill that space in a way the church never could. In their contribution to *Missionary Care*, Gary Strauss and Kathy Narramore state, "We have observed that much of the responsibility for the preparation and the spiritual and emotional support of missionaries has been assumed to be the domain of the mission agency. . . . It is imperative that the local church play a larger role in world missions, particularly in the care and development

of missionaries that they send out."[19] In response, the church bears the responsibility of reclaiming its biblical role.

The data examined in chapter 4 showed strong correlations between the role of church leaders and greater church involvement among students. The regression tests in this chapter also revealed the role of a church leader to be a strong predictor of student response in areas related to calling. Churches have a great opportunity to capitalize on this information. This will mean a significant investment in students, but perhaps not in the way church leaders initially think. Rather than create new programs or separate ministries to draw in college students, churches should seek ways to incorporate them into the current life of the church. Invite them into homes. Involve them in current church work, including children's ministry, youth ministry, work details, community outreach, and hospital visits. Connect them with older believers who can shape and sharpen them. As a result, students benefit from a long view of the church and not a truncated experience with other students. As church leaders watch the students over time, they can speak more honestly and accurately into the students' lives. This relationship will also allow church leaders to take the lead with those considering the mission field. First, they will be able to identify potential missionaries more readily. Second, it will allow leaders to either affirm or disavow a student's call. Finally, they will be able to help potential missionaries determine the validity of the organization or task.

When churches take this level of responsibility with a student during college, the level of mutual partnership will increase with missionaries on the field. Sending churches can invest in students with a greater degree and quality of care while they are on the field, and missionaries will expect and enjoy that care because they know they have been purposefully sent. By forming intentional relationships, sending churches do more

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[19] Gary Strauss and Kathy Narramore, "The Increasing Role of the Sending Church," in *Missionary Care: Counting the Cost for World Evangelization*, ed. Kelly O'Donnell (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1992), 299.

than mail care packages. As Ryan Martin exhorts, "If the church truly views their missionaries as an extension of the church, then the physical separation between the sent one and the sender shouldn't diminish the spiritual oversight the church can provide."[20]

Sending churches should also be intimately acquainted with their missionaries' international realities. Not all missionaries are sent to plant churches. Therefore, their options for church involvement might be limited. Those in campus ministries, for example, might enter locations with security risks, which unavoidably reduce church options. Others will enter countries where churches exist but language barriers hinder engagement. In those scenarios, sending churches must engage with their missionaries with intentional pastoral care. Even if international missionaries join a church overseas, the sending church's investment pays exponential dividends as an ongoing source of encouragement and accountability. To provide this standard of care, sending churches must operate with intentionality. They need to communicate clearly and without fear with the sending agency. This is their biblical duty in sending missionaries.

Recommendations for Future Research

This thesis primarily focused on research related to Cru's internal philosophies and practices and their impact on international interns. That leaves a significant portion of potential research untouched. For example, the next step in working to strengthen this partnership would be a quantitative study with sending churches to gauge their perspective on the relationship. What would they say has gone well? In their eyes, what gaps exist? What do they wish sending agencies believed and practiced? Too often, a lack of communication has resulted in assumptions by one party or the other. This type of research would allow an organization like Cru to take significant steps in understanding how its practices impact local churches.

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[20] Ryan Martin, *Holding the Rope: How the Local Church Can Care for Its Sent Ones* (Knoxville, TN: Upstream Collective, 2022), 54.

Second, more research could be done to assess whether a connection exists between the role of a local church and a healthy missionary life. This type of study would allow churches and sending agencies to look beyond their personal partnership and into the well-being of missionaries on the field. Using a blend of quantitative and qualitative survey items, this research could examine those who have flourished on the field and those who have folded on the field by evaluating their connection to a sending church. The results could help predict what factors influence a missionary's decision to remain on the field or come home. This would be particularly helpful in times of crisis when the sending church and sending agency need to work closely for the good of the missionary.

Finally, the chi-square test for independence revealed a relationship between gender and the area of the world in which interns choose to serve. As noted in chapter 4, more data would need to be gathered and analyzed along with historical data to determine the depth and nature of that relationship. Not only would this have a potential impact on how Cru recruits men and women differently, but it might also impact what type of resourcing needs to be made available for interns in certain areas of the world. For instance, if Cru could determine that a high percentage of women will request to serve in the Middle East, then it could know what types of systems need to be available to care well for those missionaries. Otherwise, those missionaries would need to be placed in another part of the world that can serve them better.

Conclusion

Though the church and Cru have enjoyed an uneasy relationship at times, there is much to be celebrated. Students are being reached with the gospel. Disciples are being formed. Laborers are being sent. God is building his kingdom. Yet, there is room for growth. Ultimately, Cru and local churches want the same thing, but their values and philosophies have not always aligned, placing a strain on the partnership. For its part, Cru needs to release some of its responsibility and reevaluate the measure of its influence.

The organization provides valuable services, but students need the church in ways they do not need a campus ministry. Likewise, churches need to reconsider how to fulfill their biblical mandate in the calling and care of international missionaries. Cru and churches need to think beyond the campus experience together. Hammett concludes, “Sooner or later, the great majority of believers will depend on churches for their ongoing spiritual life and ministry, and parachurch groups are irresponsible if they do not prepare their members for that eventuality.”[21] A strong partnership will help students construct values and beliefs that will carry them through a lifetime of service.

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[21] Hammett, “How Church and Parachurch Should Relate,” 205.

APPENDIX 1

CRU STATEMENT OF FAITH

The following document is the Cru Statement of Faith, completed by Bill Bright in 1971. Apart from minor revisions to update the language, it has remained unchanged.[1]

[1] Originally, Bright claimed the Westminster Confession of Faith as the basis of CCC's beliefs. He developed an official statement of faith in 1957 "to clarify Crusade's doctrinal positions and methodology" to leaders at Bob Jones University, a strategic partner in CCC's early years. John G. Turner, *Bill Bright and Campus Crusade for Christ: The Renewal of Evangelicalism in Postwar America* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 78. See also "Statement of Faith," appendix E in Michael Richardson, *Amazing Faith: The Authorized Biography of Bill Bright, Founder of Campus Crusade for Christ* (Colorado Springs: Waterbrook Press, 2000), 267.

Statement of Faith

The sole basis of our beliefs is the Bible, God's infallible written Word, the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments. We believe that it was uniquely, verbally and fully inspired by the Holy Spirit and that it was written without error (that is, it is inerrant) in the original manuscripts. It is the supreme and final authority in all matters on which it speaks.

We accept those areas of doctrinal teaching on which, historically, there has been general agreement among all true Christians. Because of the specialized calling of our movement, we desire to allow for freedom of conviction on other doctrinal matters, provided that any interpretation is based upon the Bible alone and that no such interpretation shall become an issue which hinders the ministry to which God has called us.

1. There is one true God, eternally existing in three persons—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—each of whom possesses equally all the attributes of Deity and the characteristics of personality.

2. Jesus Christ is God, the living Word, who became flesh through His miraculous conception by the Holy Spirit and His virgin birth. Hence, He is perfect Deity and true humanity united in one person forever.

3. He lived a sinless life and voluntarily atoned for human sins by dying on the cross as a substitute, thus satisfying divine justice and accomplishing salvation for all who trust in Him alone.

4. He rose from the dead in the same body, though glorified, in which He lived and died.

5. He ascended bodily into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God the Father, where He, the only mediator between God and humanity, continually makes intercession for His own.

6. Adam and Eve were originally created in the image of God. They sinned by disobeying God; thus, they were alienated from their Creator. That historic fall brought all people under divine condemnation.

7. Human nature is corrupted. As a result, all people are totally unable to please God. Everyone is in need of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit.

8. Salvation is wholly a work of God's free grace and is not the work, in whole or in part, of human works or goodness or religious ceremony. God imputes His righteousness to those who put their faith in Christ alone for their salvation and thereby justifies them in His sight.

9. It is the privilege of all who are born again of the Spirit to be assured of their salvation from the very moment in which they trust Christ as their Savior. This assurance is not based upon any kind of human merit but is produced by the witness of the Holy Spirit, who confirms in the believer the testimony of God in His written word.

10. The Holy Spirit has come into the world to reveal and glorify Christ and to apply the saving work of Christ to individuals. He convicts and draws sinners to Christ, imparts new life to them, continually indwells them from the moment of spiritual birth and seals them until the day of redemption. His fullness, power and control are appropriated in the believer's life by faith.

11. Believers are called to live so in the power of the indwelling Spirit that they will not fulfill the lust of the flesh but will bear fruit to the glory of God.

12. Jesus Christ is the Head of the church, His body, which is composed of all people, living and dead, who have been joined to Him through saving faith.

13. God admonishes His people to assemble together regularly for worship, for participation in ordinances, for edification through the Scriptures and for mutual encouragement.

14. At physical death the believer enters immediately into eternal, conscious fellowship with the Lord and awaits the resurrection of the body to everlasting glory and blessing.

15. At physical death the unbeliever enters immediately into eternal, conscious separation from the Lord and awaits the resurrection of the body to everlasting judgment and condemnation.

16. Jesus Christ will come again to the earth—personally, visibly and bodily—to consummate history and the eternal plan of God.

17. The Lord Jesus Christ commanded all believers to proclaim the gospel throughout the world and to disciple people from every nation. The fulfillment of that Great Commission requires that all worldly and personal ambitions be subordinated to a total commitment to "Him who loved us and gave Himself for us."

APPENDIX 2

RELATIONSHIP TO THE LOCAL CHURCH SURVEY

The following document was provided to Cru interns as a part of this project. This survey was designed to gain a better understanding of how Cru's interns relate to their sending churches.

Relationship to the Local Church Survey

Research Instrumentation
The role of the church is an important component in the spiritual development of a believer. The purpose of this research project is to better understand the relationship that exists between Cru's international interns and their respective churches. Information will be collected in two parts. Section 1 collects demographic data. Section 2 asks you to give your opinions about your experience while you were in college. Section 3 asks you to give your opinions about your experience while serving overseas. The survey items in Sections 2 and 3 will ask you to give a response based on a five-point scale.

Agreement to Participate
The survey in which you are about to participate is designed to gain a better understanding for how Cru's interns relate to their sending churches. This research is being conducted by Ben McGuire, one of Cru's International Sending Coordinators, and with the permission of Cru's leadership. Your participation is voluntary. Though your responses may be used for internal purposes, at no time will they be directly associated with your name beyond the researcher. By completing this survey, you consent to having your responses used in this research project.

Section 1

The first section will ask you some demographic questions. Circle the appropriate answer.

1. Email:

   ____

2. What is your gender?

   Male **Female**

3. In which of Cru's US geographies is the school you attended?

   Geo 1 (ME, NH, VT, CT, RI, MA, NY, PA, NJ)
   Geo 2 (MD, DE, DC, VA, NC)
   Geo 3 (SC, GA, FL)
   Geo 4 (MI, IL, IN)
   Geo 5 (Western PA, WV, OH, KY, TN)
   Geo 6 (AL, MS, AR, LA, TX, OK)
   Geo 7 (WI, MN, IA, MO, ND, SD, NE, KS)
   Geo 8 (MT, ID, Eastern WA, Eastern OR, WY, UT, CO, NM, Western TX)
   Geo 9 (Western WA, Western OR, NV, CA, AZ

4. In which Area of the world do you currently serve with Cru?

   Europe **NAME** **PACT** **GAP** **LAC** **Africa**

5. Did your campus have a Cru movement?

   Yes **No**

6. On average, how many hours per week did you spend doing Cru activities during college?
   A. 0-5
   B. 6-10
   C. 10+
   D. I was not involved with Cru

7. Are you a member of the church you consider to be your "sending" church? (In this case, your "sending" church is the one you felt most connected to during college before you reported overseas.)

   Yes **No**

Section 2
This section asks you to consider your experience with a local church during college. For this portion of the survey, "local church" refers to the church you were most connected with while in college. For the purposes of this survey, "church leadership" or "church leader" could be a pastor (senior, associate, college, missions, etc.), elder, Sunday school teacher, etc.

Directions: Give your opinion using the following scale: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly Agree. Please circle only one option. If you were not involved with Cru during college or there was no Cru movement on your campus, select "N/A" for survey items 9, 11, and 13.

8. During college, I valued local church membership.

   Strongly Disagree **Disagree** **Neutral** **Agree** **Strongly Agree**

9. During college, Cru staff encouraged local church membership.

   Strongly Disagree **Disagree** **Neutral** **Agree** **Strongly Agree**
   N/A

10. During college, I regularly served at my local church.

    Strongly Disagree **Disagree** **Neutral** **Agree** **Strongly Agree**

11. During college, Cru staff members encouraged me to serve at my local church.

    Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree N/A

12. During college, a local church leader played a significant role in my spiritual development.

    Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

13. During college, Cru staff members encouraged me to be developed spiritually through my local church.

    Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree N/A

14. I felt well-known by my local church leadership during college.

    Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

15. I met regularly with a local church leader during college.

    Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agre

16. I sought input from a local church leader before deciding to intern with Cru.

    Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

Section 3
This section asks you to consider your experience while on your international assignment. For this portion of the survey, "sending church" refers to the church you were most connected with in the US before reporting overseas. "Local church" refers to a church in your international city. NOTE: These definitions have changed from the previous section.

Directions: Give your opinion using the following scale: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly Agree. Please circle only one option.

17. I believed my sending church had a responsibility to maintain a relationship with me while overseas.

    Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

18. I believed I was accountable to my sending church for my ministry while overseas.

    Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

19. I regularly discussed my ongoing ministry responsibilities with someone from my sending church.

    Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

20. I believe my sending church had a responsibility for my spiritual well-being while overseas.

    Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

21. I regularly spoke with someone from my sending church about my spiritual well-being.

    Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

22. Cru expected me to be connected to a local church in my international city.

    Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

23. My team leaders encouraged our team to pursue active involvement in a local church in my international city.

    Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

24. I was actively involved in a local church in my international city.

    Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

APPENDIX 3

CRU'S CAMPUS MINISTRY US GEOGRAPHIES

Geography	States Included
1	ME, NH, VT, CT, RI, MA, NY, PA, and NJ
2	MD, DE, DC, VA, and NC
3	SC, GA, and FL
4	MI, IL, and IN
5	Western PA, WV, OH, KY, and TN
6	AL, MS, AR, LA, TX, and OK
7	WI, MN, IA, MO, ND, SD, NE, and KS
8	AK, MT, ID, Eastern WA, Eastern OR, WY, UT, CO, NM, and Western TX
9	Western WA, Western OR, NV, CA, AZ, and HI

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ABSTRACT

STRENGTHENING THE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE CHURCH AND PARACHURCH IN THE CALLING AND CARE OF CRU'S INTERNATIONAL INTERNS

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The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2023
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Gaps exist between sending churches and Cru in the calling and care of Cru's international interns that will only be bridged through stronger collaboration so that the two can partner well together for the kingdom. Chapter 1 examines several works to acquaint the reader with the conversation surrounding the ways churches and parachurches partner together. Since parachurch organizations like Cru are not a recent phenomenon and neither are the tensions in their relationships to local churches, chapter 2 provides a study of relevant biblical passages and a survey of the historical context for the current relational gaps. Chapter 3 follows with a brief discussion of Cru's origin and the core values that distinguish the organization. Because the philosophies and practices Cru utilizes to reach college students naturally carry forward in the life and ministry of those who intern, two recent studies are analyzed in chapter 4 to pinpoint potential gaps in the sending process. Chapter 5 presents conclusions and recommendations to help facilitate partnership through appropriate expectations and clear communication.

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