RUNNING HEAD: JESUS SAID, "GO!"

Jesus said: "Go!": Why Are H.I.S. Years Participants Choosing to Follow?

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Executive Summary

The purpose of this qualitative inquiry was to determine the factors that motivate H.I.S. Years participants to engage in a two year voluntary global service project, their perceived expectations for their overall experience and whether their support systems, coursework and past experiences have prepared them for their extended overseas service trip. Individual interviews were conducted with twelve out of the fifteen H.I.S Years participants. Participants included six alumni and six undergraduate students. Five of the participants were members of the First Cohort of H.I.S. Years program and seven were from the Second Cohort. Three of the participants, all from the First Cohort, were currently on-field and nine were preparing for departure within the next year.

Responses from individual interview participants clustered around three general themes. H.I.S Years participants reported on the significance and importance of having support systems, the value of participating in a short-term missions experience, and their personal motivations being intrinsic, altruistic and extrinsic. The participants also reported a desire to learn about other cultures, people groups and religions, the draw of the student loan repayment, and their pursuit of long-term missions.

Areas of planned change include providing intentional team building exercises amongst cohorts, continuing to advocate for short-term missions, solidifying the link between H.I.S. Years and the Office of World Missions and Global Studies Department, and improving the application and interview process to bring in participants who truly desire to serve unreached populations. Other implications for the H.I.S. Years program are also discussed.

Individuals with an intrinsic orientation toward religion are said to "live" their religion (their religion is what lies behind their whole approach to life), whereas those with an extrinsic religious motivation "use" their religion for some personal gain, such as relief or comfort
Berkel, Vandiver, & Bahner, 2004, p. 121

Introduction

The Institute for Outreach Ministries (IOM) has been the crux of Azusa Pacific University's mission since it was founded in 1899. The university was founded by Mary Hill as a training school for Christian workers, with the focus of the curriculum being training students to serve. The curriculum and co-curriculum at the university have been constructed and adapted over the years to expand student's worldviews in order to train them to serve God through their vocation.

Historically, the IOM has provided, as part of the university's internationalization efforts, opportunities for students to study abroad, participate in humanitarian aid projects, and partake in short-term mission trips. However, within recent years, the IOM have come to the realization that students are not making the transition from these short-term global opportunities to a commitment to long-term global Christ-centered service as alumni. In the hope of bridging the gap between short and long-term service, the IOM created a mid-term missions opportunity program (thanks to a large anonymous donation) called H.I.S. (Hearing, Investing, Serving) Years in the fall of 2008.

The mission and purpose statement for the H.I.S. Years program are as follows:

Mission Statement

To strategically equip and send Azusa Pacific University graduates to serve with Christ based community development/mission organizations that work with least/unreached people groups for a minimum of two years.

Purpose Statement

To provide an opportunity for students to serve full-time for two years or more in a world service organization after graduation. It also serves as a catalyst for graduates who want to serve in lifelong cross cultural ministry. (Azusa Pacific University, NA, p. 2)

The program was designed in an attempt to eliminate or lessen the barriers (i.e. fundraising, finding a sending organization, and personal preparation) which typically prevent individuals from committing to long-term service. By eliminating these barriers, alumni will be empowered to commit to mid-term (minimum of two years) service, with the hope that they will commit to long-term Christ-centered global service after the program's completion. The program eliminates the barriers to mid-term service by providing funding to assist the participant in paying off school loans, assisting with securing a partnering missions organization, providing training and mentorship, and continual spiritual and emotional support throughout their tenure in the program.

Students who are interested in the program must apply, meet specific qualifications (participation in study abroad and short-term missions), and participate in an intense interview process before they are accepted. Once in the program, the participants attend weekly meetings with their cohort, take part in mentoring, and are trained and equipped to complete their term of commitment. Throughout this training process, participants are continuously assessed, in regards to their readiness to serve, and can at anytime in the process be terminated from their cohort.

At the present time, the H.I.S. Years program has participants serving in Nepal, Israel, and the Northern Caucuses; with participants preparing to depart within the year for Vietnam, the Middle East, India, and Indonesia.

The purpose of this qualitative study is to determine the factors that motivate H.I.S. Years participants to engage in a two year voluntary global service project, their perceived expectations for their overall experience and whether their support systems, coursework and past experiences have prepared them for their extended overseas service trip.

Millennials

Millennials were born in the late 1980s and early 1990s, meaning a majority of students enrolled in higher education are members of this new generation (McGlynn, 2008). The Millennial generation is

characterized by the following seven core traits: "special," "sheltered," "confident," "team-oriented," "conventional," "pressured" and "achieving" (Howe & Strauss, 2007, pp. 59-60; Stafford & Griffis, 2008, p. 13). Millennials have also been described as "innovative, self-reliant…fast-tracked and sensitive" (Akande, 2008, para. 4). As a generation, they tend to be comfortable with authority, eager to please (Howe & Strauss), "structured and dependable, but more reluctant to take a chance" (Akande, para. 5). They are self-confident, success driven, service oriented and global-, civic- and community-minded (Howe & Strauss).

The Millennial Generation was raised in an era exclusively run by technology, all of which moves at an unrelenting pace; they can chat with their friends via instant messaging, Facebook, or test messaging, shop online 24 hours a day, and instantly access answers to any question via the internet (McGlynn, 2008; Tucker, 2006). Millennials expect the pace of the world to keep up with them and provide them with trouble-free, 24-7 conveniences. Like their technology, they expect "the immediate gratification of making an impact by doing meaningful work" (Akande, 2008, para. 3).

The Millennial Generation has been shaped by the events of their lifetime. From terrorist attacks on American soil to what seems like the unlimited possibilities of technology and science, the Millennial Generation have seen the best and the worst the world has to offer live on their television screens (Akande, 2008). Their life experiences "have allowed them to develop global attitudes with both a confidence and optimism not experienced by their parents, yet they remain dedicated to important causes ranging from civic to environmental" (Akande, para. 4).

Millennials are positioned in history to be the next hero generation (Howe & Strauss, 2007). They are unwilling "to sit back and wait for others to act; instead they are ready and willing to take on the responsibility of leadership themselves" (Greenberg, 2008, para. 7). Millennials believe they can make a difference, both individually and collectively, and are constantly seeking to produce something worthwhile. An in-depth national survey of 2,000 individuals, aged 18-29 years of age, in 2007-2008,

revealed that 79% of those surveyed agreed that their generation "has better opportunities to make a difference and produce structural change than previous generations" (Greenberg, para 8). The same survey also revealed that Millennials are more likely to believe that "addressing the bigger issues facing my generation starts with individuals willing to take a stand and take action (80 percent agree)" (Greenberg, para. 18). According to Greenberg, Millennials believe "in the power of innovation and the ability of Americans, no matter how dire the current situation, to innovate the future" (para. 11).

Although, not all members of the Millennial Generation can or will be defined by these traits, and many will personally resist them, research indicates that these core traits substantially define the members of the millennial generation.

Missions

The Christian church has been sending individuals out as missionaries to spread the Good News of Christ's death and resurrection for the forgiveness of sin since the beginning of the first century. Jesus Christ commanded his followers to "go and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19, NIV). The missionaries sent out by the church in the first century, up until approximately the mid 20th Century, were sent out as "career" missionaries. These individuals made missions their career by dedicating their life's work to spreading the gospel among unreached people groups (Jaffarian, 2008).

This paradigm of missions began to change in the mid to late 20th century. Youth With A Mission (YWAM) formed in the early 1960's with the mentality of sending youth into the world after they graduated from high school so they could discover their purpose before attending college (YWAM, 2004). YWAM and other missions agencies began to appoint "missionaries for limited, planned terms of only a few months or years" (Jaffarian, 2008, p. 35). The individuals serving shorter terms of missionary service were called "short-termers" and were typically "students or young adults" (Jaffarian, p. 35). By the mid 1990's, terminology had been established to describe the different lengths of missions (Jaffarian). Short-term was considered a period of service from "two weeks up to one year," middle-

term (mid-term) was a period of service "from one year to four years" (Jaffarian, p. 35), and long-term

was defined as a period of service that stretched beyond the four year mark. A fourth descriptive term

used in the literature is the term "mission-trip participants" (Jaffarian, p. 36). This term describes

individuals who have participated in mission experiences that are typically two weeks or less in length.

These short-term trips tend to not be "supervised by mission agencies" (Jaffarian, p. 36) but are rather,

sent out directly from congregations or private religious schools.

Statistics indicate "the sending of long-term missionaries" (Jaffarian, 2008, p. 36) peaked near

the end of the 1980's. The sending of mid-term missionaries continued to grow throughout the 1990's

but is now beginning to decline. The number of short-term missionaries has continued to grow since the

1970's (Jaffarian, p. 36), with the 1980's and 1990's being "known as the era of the 'short-term mission

boom'" (Walling et. al, 2006). According to Priest, Dischinger, Rasmussen and Brown (2006), "more than

one and a half million U.S. Christians travel abroad each year on 'short term mission trips,' with an

additional unknown number traveling on similar mission trips within the United States" (p. 432).

Research indicates participation in a short-term missions trip will increase the individual's interest in

long-term missionary service; however the "explosive growth of" short-term missions has "not been

accompanied by any growth in the number of career missionaries" (Priest, et al., p. 437).

The role missionaries play within a people group has also changed significantly within the last

quarter century. Since the precedent of the Great Commission was established, missions has been about

"making disciples" (Matthew 28:19), also known as evangelism. However, recent trends indicate a move

away from strictly evangelistic missions to missions focused on areas such as community development,

relief work, and medical care. This shift is not necessarily portrayed in the number of career missionaries

reported as being in these areas of service, but instead the trend is shown in the amount of money

supporting each form of missions (Jaffarian, 2008). Reports indicate "87.6 percent" of career

missionaries identify their priority to be evangelism and "4.9 percent" identify their priority as

"relief/development;" however, the same reports indicate that more financial support is given to "agencies focused on relief/development than to agencies focused on evangelism/discipleship" (Jaffarian, p. 37).

Motivation

According to Jaramillo and Mulki (2008), "motivation is a psychological state that explains a person's willingness to take action toward goal completion" (p. 39). Motivation theory indicates that an individual's motivation to behave in a certain manner is determined by their "desire to perform an action" and their "perceived ability to do the task" (Jaramillo & Mulki, p. 37). In general, motivation can be broken down into two categories: intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation can be described as an individual's desire to be engaged in an activity purely for the fulfillment that comes from participation; whereas, extrinsic motivation would drive an individual's behavior to participate in an activity "as a means to an end" (Jaramillo & Mulki, p. 39; Guiffrida, 2006, p. 453). An individual who lacks both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, to complete a task, would be considered to be in a state of "amotivation" (Guiffrida, p. 453).

Research indicates there are three motivations for individuals to serve, "altruistic, egoistic, and obligatory" (Jones & Hill, 2003, p. 517). Altruistic motivation is a desire to serve because of an "inner sense of charity toward others" (Marotta & Nashman, 1998, p. 19). Egoistic motivation is a desire to become involved in hopes that one will feel "better about one's own self because of the service work" (Marotta & Nashman, p. 19). Obligatory motivation, is exactly what it sounds like, being motivated to serve because one is obligated to do so (e.g. community service hours required to graduate from high school or college) (Marotta & Nashman). Jones and Hill's study revealed that students "who continued their community service involvement in college" (p. 530) transitioned from egoistic and obligatory motivations of their high school years to more altruistic motivations for community service in their college years.

Model of Involvement / Engagement

Csikszentmihalyi (1997) has noted the value of deeply engaging activities for developing a meaningful and satisfying life. Similarly, Astin (1997) and Kuh (2003) have provided significant support to the notion that students develop and learn through engagement in curricular and co-curricular activities during college. Astin's Model of Involvement is composed of five "postulates": 1. involvement is the "investment of physical and psychological energy in various objects" (objects can be general or specific); 2. "involvement occurs along a continuum;" 3. "involvement has both quantitative and qualitative" characteristics; 4. "the amount of student learning and personal development…is directly proportional to the quality and quantity" of a student's involvement; and 5. "the effectiveness of…policy or practice is directly related to" the ability to "increase student involvement" (Astin, 1999, p. 51). Kuh (2003) puts an emphasis on student engagement in educationally purposeful activities both inside and outside the classroom as a precursor to high levels of student learning and personal development, as well as an indicator of educational effectiveness. All three theorists place the student at the center of the learning process, because they believe involvement enhances the development of both cognitive and affective outcomes in students during their collegiate experience.

Data from the National Survey of Student Engagement for four-year institutions and the Community College Survey of Student Engagement for the community college sector, indicates that "student engagement is the key to academic motivation, persistence, [and] degree completion" (McGlynn, 2008, p. ,20) as well as, cognitive, psychosocial, and leadership development. Student engagement can take the form of participation in curricular and co-curricular activities as well as meaningful relationships with faculty, staff and peers. Activities related to academics may include: course material, study abroad programs, participating in study groups, or being a member of an academic honors society or career-related organization. Involvement in the co-curricular may include student organizations, employment on-campus, or service-oriented trips or projects. Baxter (2004)

notes when faculty and staff create meaningful relationships with students, they will further students' understanding of their own identity development and growth towards self-authorship.

When exploring the interrelationship between student engagement and a desire for humanitarian work, one must take into account the learning outcomes of students who participate in study abroad, service learning, and short and long term global service experiences. There is an extensive amount of research available which indicates that civic engagement programs do in fact lead to more engaged and involved citizens of the future (Caputo 2005; Colby, Beaumont, & Stephens 2003; Spiezio, Baker, & Boland 2003). When engaged in civic activities, research indicates, that students appreciate others they encounter from different backgrounds, recognize one's self and cultural context in relation to others, participate in community with individuals from other ethnic backgrounds and demonstrate a commitment to life-long service (Mather, 2008). When studying or serving abroad, research indicates students enhance their global understanding and commitment to social responsibility in the global sphere (Mather). Students become aware of their privilege, discover similarities between their home community and the visited country, become enticed with adventure and exploration, and have powerful experiences in leaving home and seeing other parts of the world; leading to the desire of creating a sense of meaning making in humanitarian work (Mather).

Fowler and Parks/Spiritual Development/Faith Development

Fowler and Parks' theories work together to give deeper insight into what the majority of college students go through in regards to faith development. Fowler's "faith" is not tied to any specific religion and can be defined as how one interprets "the events and relations that surround" (Holcomb & Nonneman, 2004, p. 95). Fowler's theory has seven stages, but the following three are significant to development during the college years: "Mythical-literal," "Synthetic-conventional" and "Individuative-reflective" (Holcomb & Nonneman, p. 96). The Mythical-literal stage is commonly attributed to children, but there are adults who are at this stage and/or stay at this stage throughout the remainder of their

lives. This stage is characterized by an inability to critically think and being controlled by one's feelings. In the Synthetic-conventional stage, outside sources are the authority on what one believes and what is believed is lived out, but there has been no critical thinking done about the world view held. The fourth stage, Individuative-reflective, is one where the individual is able to critically examine the customs, principles, and philosophies they hold. This examination tends to put individuals in a place where they "see the world in terms of black and white" (Holcomb & Nonneman, p. 96).

Parks' model on faith development comes into play between the Synthetic-conventional stage and the Individuative-reflective stage. Parks' theory suggests "that the transition between stages three and four, an arduous and somewhat lengthy process, is actually a stage in and of itself" (Holcomb & Nonneman, 2004, p. 97). This transition phase, it is believed, is brought on by a "crisis" which causes the individual to explore what they hold to be true (Holcomb & Nonneman). Parks calls this crisis "shipwreck" and indicates it is "the initial step in the young adult life toward 'gladness,' 'amazement,' and ultimately a more refined sense of meaning and faith" (Bryant & Astin, 2008, p. 6).

Holcomb and Nonneman's (2004) study, examined the spiritual development that occurred during the undergraduate experience at Christian colleges and universities. They found that the majority of freshman enter college at either the Mythical-literal or Synthetic-conventional stage, while a small percentage come to college at the transition between the Synthetic-conventional and Individuative-reflective stages. Approximately half of the seniors were found to be in or past the transition phase. Those students, both freshman and seniors, who were farther along in their faith development, tended to report encounters with individuals who held different world views, cultures other than their own, and/or some type of emotional crisis (Holcomb and Nonneman).

Support Systems/Mentoring

Support systems for college students come in many shapes, sizes, individuals, groups, and categories. From "helicopter parents" to 24/7 communication with friends via text messaging, Facebook,

and email, Millennials appear to have a desire to maintain strong support systems. Recent research indicates that the Millennial Generation "rely[s] on family, peers, and other influencers for daily interaction and for making decisions in life" (Stafford & Griffis, 2008, p. 26). Within institutions of higher education support systems are typically manifested in mentoring relationships, whether official or unofficial. Mentoring is usually defined "as a relationship between two people who differ in age, experience, and status" (McGuire & Reger, 2003, p. 56). The mentor typically acts "as a teacher, sage, and sponsor" in hopes of facilitating learning, "moral support, affirmation, encouragement, and confidence building" (McGuire & Reger, p. 56).

Parks (2000) implements the idea of "hearth" as being strategic in "all mentoring environments" especially in the mentoring relationships that are aimed at "the formation of young adult faith" (p. 154). The "hearth" does not have to be a literal fireplace, but is rather a concept. A place of "hearth" invites "pause, reflection, and conversation", allows one to be "warmed in both body and soul," and is a place where we are "comfortable, and tend to linger" (Parks, p. 154).

Summary and Research Question

The creation of a service mentality is not easily reduced to a simple formula; it is a complex combination of the experiences, individuals, social structures and personal characteristics that an individual encounters during their lifetime. Ferman (2005) sums it up well in his study of a civic engagement program at a university: "young people, when provided with the appropriate mix of supports and opportunities, will take on challenging projects with the hope of improving their communities and their worlds" (p. 45). However, little research has been done to help us understand the factors that actually play in one's decision to serve globally. What kinds of college experiences in the curriculum and the co-curriculum effect their decision to serve globally? Do particular institutional or external factors play into their decision? This qualitative study hopes to explore these issues further and

begin to examine the factors which influence H.I.S. Years participants to commit to serving globally for two years.

Descriptive Information

Participants for this study were full-time undergraduate senior male and female students, and male and female alumni from Azusa Pacific University who have been selected to participate in the H.I.S. Years program. H.I.S. Years participants are students and alumni who made the conscious decision to dedicate two years of their lives to a global service project after graduation. Twelve of the fifteen H.I.S. Years participants were individually interviewed. Participants included five alumni from the First Cohort and seven undergraduate students from the Second Cohort. Three of the interviewees were on-field at the time of the interview and the remaining nine are preparing for departure within the next year. The sample of participants was selected through purposeful deviant case sampling (cases or people who are rich in information because they are unique or special in some way). All H.I.S. Years participants were invited to be part of the interview process.

Bracketing Your Perspective

The H.I.S. Years participants were chosen for this research project because they are a group that one of the researchers works with closely and she had a strong desire to learn more about the individual stories behind why students were choosing to engage in this particular program. The idea of research being done on this program and/or group of students had been presented to one of the researchers on several occasions, so when the assignment was given to do a qualitative research study on any given group of college students, it only seemed natural to decide on a group that was very unique, of interest to the researchers, and easy to access.

The Research Team, who all individually identify themselves as Christian, are highly supportive of missions, as all three researchers have participated in short-term missions on multiple occasions. Two of the researchers served as Graduate Assistants in the Office of World Missions at Azusa Pacific

University; which is where the connection between the Research Team and the H.I.S. Years program was forged due to the connection to students' participation in both short-term mission trips and the H.I.S. Years program. One of the researchers is particularly connected to the program as she serves as a mentor for the H.I.S. Years program (though the student she mentors was not interviewed) and is often part of discussions revolving around H.I.S. Years programming, recruiting and participation.

The Research Team is very supportive of the mission and goals of the H.I.S. Years program. The whole team has seen, through their experiences in short-term missions, the impact that serving in missions can have on one's faith and identity development. They are very encouraged to see a program in existence that alleviates the barriers that prevent college graduates from pursuing mid-term missions.

Analysis of Themes

Motivation

Motivated by Previous Short-Term Experience

All of the H.I.S. Years participants mentioned the impact that their short-term missions or service minded experience had on their desire to be involved in the H.I.S. Years program. Shelly, an alumni in the First Cohort shared:

> …the number one, I would have to say my missions trip to Uganda. That was what first got me to seriously consider doing something like this [H.I.S. program] in the first place.

When asked about how other global service minded experiences have affected his desire to participate in H.I.S. Years, Brian, an undergraduate student in the Second Cohort, explained:

> On my Global Learning Term is when I decided that living cross-culturally is what I want to do for the rest of my life.

Chris, an alumni in the First Cohort, agreed:

> I would say that South Africa [short-term missions experience] definitely had an influence. Just seeing what that [missions] looked like or what that could look like, because we worked with a really good organization, seeing how He worked in that. That definitely had an influence and gave me an idea of what it [missions] was about; which probably made the whole process [becoming involved in H.I.S. Years], or the whole decision easier.

Intrinsic/Altruistic Motivation

Overall, the H.I.S. Years participants showed an intense desire to take part in the mid-term program for either intrinsic or altruistic reasons. In regards to intrinsic motivation, Joseph, an alumni in the Second Cohort, explained his desire to serve in this way:

The willingness to serve in this program comes from my heart's desire to do something extreme for Christ, to be put in a place where I rely on God and nothing else.

Kenny, an undergraduate student in the Second Cohort, passionately shared his reason for serving in this manner:

My main influence was that God has loved me so much and has forgiven me for so much that if I don't serve Him, in whatever means, then that free gift I've been given means nothing to me or it means nothing to belittle salvation, power and glory that God has given. So if at all I can manifest a love that Christ has loved me and share that with people, God use me please. If I can't then send me back home or kill this desire in my heart to serve Him.

In regards to altruistic motivations, Jenny, an undergraduate student in the Second Cohort, explained her motivation to serve this way:

I have a passion for advocating for the least in the world and believe God wants to use that passion to both send me to the un-reached and underprivileged globally, as well as advocate on their behalf in my home culture.

Shelly, an alumni in the First Cohort, echoed the altruistic motivation in this way:

I feel strongly that I want to go where there is a major need, and where God can use my specific skills, passions, and training to meet that need. Therefore, I am willing to go wherever that may be.

Extrinsic Motivation

The H.I.S. Years participants expressed some extrinsic motivations throughout their interviews. This type of motivation mainly came out in two ways, a desire to learn from their experience and a desire to participate in the program because of the student loan repayment aspect of the program.

Learning

Holly, an alumni in the First Cohort, expressed her desire to learn from her experience in several parts of her application and interview:

At this point in my life, however, I most desire to learn with, and from, those about whom I know very little. I've definitely been influenced by my experience abroad, seeing how other people live and wanting to learn from them, something about these perspectives, it's definitely a motivating factor for wanting to spend two years abroad. I mean just a general curiosity and interest in different cultures. I'm going because God is moving there and I want to learn from my leaders. I think it's going to be, as much as I'm serving, it's also going to be two years of preparation I think and learning…

Student Loan Repayment

Every H.I.S. Years participant noted that the student loan repayment aspect of the program was,

at the minimum, a draw for them to choose to participate in the program. Shelly explained it this way:

The one thing that I felt was holding me back from doing something like this was the finances, the student loans. So of course, that aspect of H.I.S. Years was hugely helpful and that was something that made it possible for me to even pursue something like that.

Joseph stated:

…Jillian was like even if you don't make it into the program we still want to get you out there into the world. And I was like, well I would love to go out there into the world, but the world's holding me back in that aspect of having loans. So I mean if I wasn't getting my loans repaid for somehow, someway, I probably wouldn't have done it; at least not at this time in my life.

Though it was a major draw, several of the participants expressed they would still have pursued mid-

term and/or long-term missions without the student loan repayment. Kevin, an alumni from the First

Cohort, stated:

It was a factor [student loan repayment], but if not, I would find another way. It was a great confirmation that I could give to my mom.

When Holly was asked whether or not she would have continued to pursue missions if the funding for

student loan repayment was not available, she responded:

Oh yeah definitely! I was already moving towards wanting to go abroad or something because I'd found my organization kind of from the beginning…but I think that the financial aspect, in the beginning of when I first had thought about H.I.S. Years was just really encouraging and I think to allow me to kind of take that step of faith, cause I still have to raise support but it just seemed a little less daunting at the time. I think now if they were to say we can't give you this money that we said we could, I would still go.

Support Systems

All of the H.I.S. Years participants mentioned the significance of being supported in their decision to participate in the program, encouragement throughout the process, and continued support once they are overseas.

Friends

In response to how the participants felt supported in their pursuit of the program, every participant discussed how their friends were supportive of their endeavors throughout the entire process. Kimberly, an undergraduate student in the Second Cohort, shared:

> My biggest support is probably from my friends here [at APU]. They were all so excited when I said that I got accepted. They ask me about it all the time and how my plans are going…asking if they can help with anything or what are you trying to figure out right now and how can I pray…

Chris agreed:

> When I would tell people about the program [friends from APU], they seemed really excited about it…and really like "oh, that's so awesome you are doing that." Really interested,…a lot of them…and really just excited for me that I was really pursuing that.

Family

Although a majority of the participants spoke about receiving support from their family members, their appeared to be a pattern of parents being less supportive when they were first informed of their child's decision to participate in the program. Jenny explained:

> My dad's fairly supportive. My mom…umm…sometimes supportive. She was really not supportive in the beginning, but she is starting to come around.

Kenny also shared:

> …when I told them I had got in and that I was planning on going to serve with Muslims or to serve in the Middle East…my mom immediately started crying and my dad shook his head in defiance or disbelief, and he said that I was making a very dumb decision and my mom said that I was just breaking her heart period.

As the parents recognized the H.I.S. Years participants were actually going abroad for two years they tended to support their child in their pursuit of entering mid-term missions. Shelly explained:

My mom is really supportive in general. She has already…worked through surrendering me to God wherever He would lead me. She has said to me all through college that I want you to know whatever you decided to do, wherever you decide to go, I release you to that. Before I even considered this program, I knew I had her support.

Mentorship

In regards to support systems, the most concentrated theme was the significance of having a mentor through the H.I.S. Years program. A majority of the H.I.S. Years participants mentioned mentorship as one of the most important and influential aspects of the program. The preparing participants spoke of the significant role the mentoring relationship has played in their preparation.

Jenny expressed:

I think she [her mentor] is great. She is fun to talk to and bounce ideas off of. She has been really patient with helping me work through just ordinary life because she realizes how much that factors into my decision. Whether or not I will be dating somebody, whether or not I have a job here; just those things she wants to process out loud. At the same time she's really good about telling me about her experience and things that she's done.

Kimberly also spoke highly of her mentor:

She's [my mentor] really good at asking me about the things that I haven't thought about yet. She always asks me something, and I would be like, "Oh, I don't know." Which is really good because I need someone to ask me those questions…eventually we are going to write out a care plan. She'll be the person who knows what I need to do in certain situations. To have her be that person who's going to ask me how are you doing with this? How are you doing with that?

Joseph also shared:

He's great; love him. He just knows the right words to say to me. He's confrontational when he needs to be, but he doesn't come across in a rude or brash way where it's going to offend somebody, he brings it into a very intellectual, like let's look at this and see what's going on aspect. He really challenges me with prayer and seeking after what God has put in my life.

Those participants who were part of the first cohort of the H.I.S. Years program and were not required to have a mentor wished they would have been assigned a mentor and spoke about the necessity of mentorship in their preparation and their active service. Holly commented:

I was actually excited about having a mentor to be in conversation with throughout. That's really the only thing I've been a little disappointed about.

Chris was also excited about having a mentor, he stated:

> I wish I had a mentor to process through what I am going through over here. I mean, I have people who are there to support me, but it's just not the same. Having a mentor would have been a really great aspect of the program.

Commitment to Long Term Service

The majority of the H.I.S. Years participants viewed their endeavor into "middle-term" missions as leading into a longer-term commitment. Amber, an alumni in the First Cohort, shared:

> Definitely for as long as God keeps me, I would love to continue to do overseas missions…I think I am looking more long-term. But now being here, even with the struggles and difficulties, I am very ready to stay. If God kept me here forever, then okay, I would definitely want to do that.

Kenny agreed:

> So I am entering the HIS Years program and I want to serve for however long God will have me…two years is the minimum.

Elizabeth, an undergraduate in the Second Cohort, expressed this ideal most clearly when she stated:

> I knew I wanted to do missions after I graduated. That was never a question. I am not just a math major who wants to do this for a couple years. I mean, this is what I want to do for forever. This is my gateway.

Answer to Research Question

The purpose of this study was to determine the factors that motivate H.I.S. Years participants to engage in a two year voluntary global service project, their perceived expectations for their overall experience and whether their support systems, coursework and past experiences have prepared them for their extended overseas service trip. The narratives provided by the participants indicate that the H.I.S. Years participants are motivated for participation in the program because of their previous engagement in short-term missions. The participants tend to approach their two years of service with primarily intrinsic and altruistic motives with some extrinsic motivation mixed in. It is also evident that the participants' support systems, coursework and past experiences have prepared them for their extended overseas experience.

The typical H.I.S. Years participant grew up in a home with parents and/or a parent who proclaimed to have a belief in the Christian faith. They tend to have not moved around very much as children and their biggest move has been when they moved onto campus for college at APU. For the most part they attended public K-12 schools and spent their entire college career at APU. In high school they were involved in youth group, began to participate in missions trips, and had transformational faith experiences that allowed them to begin to make their faith their own.

The H.I.S. Years participants are very varied on what degree they are pursuing and for the most part a change in major is made at least once during their college career, if not multiple times. They do not tend to participate in study abroad programs, however for the most part they have all participated in a short-term mission trip through the Office of World Missions at APU. They tend to be world travelers, but the traveling is linked to ministry and/or missions a majority of the time.

The H.I.S. Years program was typically brought to the participants' attention through a classroom experience with a H.I.S. Years staff, an Office of World Missions staff, or a friend who was interested in and/or already pursuing the program. When it came to their motivation for applying for the program, the majority of the participants indicated intrinsic and altruistic motivations; the majority of their statements made reference to a desire to pursue missions because of their relationship with God, a calling on their life, or a desire to serve the impoverished and oppressed of the world. A majority of the participants also indicated that they had an extrinsic motivation to participate in the program, in that they desired to learn about other cultures and religions and to prepare for their future in long-term missions. One specific extrinsic factor that drew every H.I.S. Years participant to the program, even if it did not play a huge part in their actual desire to serve in missions, was the student loan repayment aspect of the program.

All of the participants indicated that they were well supported in their pursuit and participation in the H.I.S. Years program. They all spoke of support provided by their friends at APU who tended to

serve as listening ears and encouragers. In regards to parental support, all the participants indicated that their parents were supportive of their decision to be an overseas missionary; however, parental support tended to be something that developed as the participant had more logistical details of their service. The 2nd Cohort indicated that their strongest support system was their H.I.S. Years mentor, who served as someone they could count on to be an encourager throughout their entire time of service and beyond. The 1st Cohort, who was not assigned mentors, indicated that they really missed having a mentor and all were still hopeful to receive a mentor from the H.I.S. Years program even though they were so far along in the process.

Overall, the H.I.S. Years participants are excited the program exists and are thankful they have the opportunity to be part of the program so they can go, serve, live and love. Almost every participant indicated that they wished the training aspect of the program promoted a tighter knit cohort and more of a focus on learning how to be a missionary instead of all the statistics about global missions. Despite the changes they hoped to see in the training, almost every participant indicated that they had a desire to serve in global missions for longer than their two year commitment.

Suggestions for Practice

Support Systems

In accordance with the three themes that emerged from the qualitative research, a multitude of implications can be derived. All reports indicated that the millennial students that are entering the H.I.S. Years program feel that their friends are an important support network. Yet, many of the participants mentioned they did not feel as if their fellow H.I.S. Year cohort members were part of this network. They desired to engage in conversations with those in their cohort and share experiences with one another. In order to foster this unity, the H.I.S. Years staff should work to provide "mandatory fun" activities that will promote community. Likewise, changing meeting locations from a room in the Ronald Center, to

one that is more conducive to the "hearth" idea mentioned by Parks (2000) could foster an environment in which participants feel as if they can share their accomplishments and struggles with one another.

In an effort to improve on the lack of parental approval evident from the research, the H.I.S. Years staff should look at creating resources for parents as well as training students how they might best communicate their commitment to their parents. Whether it is a pamphlet of information, a parent hotline, or a workshop on campus, providing these services will inevitably ease parents' worries, and also lessen the burden for students that are torn between their desire to serve and their desire to please.

Lastly, in regards to the very dominant mentoring theme, the H.I.S. program should continue to stress the importance of this aspect of the program. They could strengthen this aspect of the program, by either equipping the mentors to answer logistical questions or reiterating to the participants that the mentoring relationship is purely for spiritual guidance and personal development.

Missions

According to the purpose statement, the H.I.S. Years program exists to "serve as a catalyst for graduates who want to serve in lifelong cross cultural ministry" (Azusa Pacific University, NA, p.2). Although this is the goal, participants are only required to serve for two years, constituting a "middle-term" missions experience (Jaffarian, 2008, pg. 35). Yet despite this requirement, the qualitative research indicates that the participants are desiring to continue their missionary service after they complete their commitment to the program, showing that the H.I.S. Years program is fulfilling its purpose. Those on the H.I.S. Years staff should continue to be strong advocates for short-term missions, as this has shown from this and previous research to be a link to commitment to long-term missions. By informing the Board of Trustees, and those in administration about the benefits and links between short term and long-term commitment, it might dispel the ever-present concern that the funds and resources of the church are being depleted by a short-term quest for "spiritual adventurism" (Dearborn, 2003).

Through discussion with the HIS years participants, it is apparent that short-term missions' trips are not in vain, but rather exposure to these experiences is a guiding factor in one's decision to serve longer-term. Also, since many of the participants felt their "calling" to serve long-term during their short term or global learning term, the H.I.S. Years staff should strive to solidify the link between H.I.S. Years and the Office of World Missions and the Global Studies Department.

Motivation

In regards to the motivation theme, it is apparent that H.I.S. Years participants are motivated by intrinsic and altruistic factors. This implies that the application and interview process appears to bring in the type of participants who truly desire to serve. Yet, in an effort to identify participants that long to advance God's kingdom, share the Gospel, and enlarge God's global church, the H.I.S. years staff could emphasize the requirement of church attendance and involvement as part of the application and interview process. Obviously, all participants did not only welcome the student loan repayment, but it has served as a catalyst for parental approval.

Conclusion

H.I.S. Years is a cutting edge program that hopes to engage young adults in global missions by providing opportunities to alleviate the barriers that tend to bar young adults from beginning to fulfill their passion to serve, live and love. This qualitative study indicates that the program is fulfilling its purpose of being a launching point for young adults into long-term missions and the staff should be confident in pursuing continued funding for a program that assists the university in fulfilling its purpose and mission while also being part of establishing God's Kingdom on earth.

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