

Faith based voluntarism in the Global South

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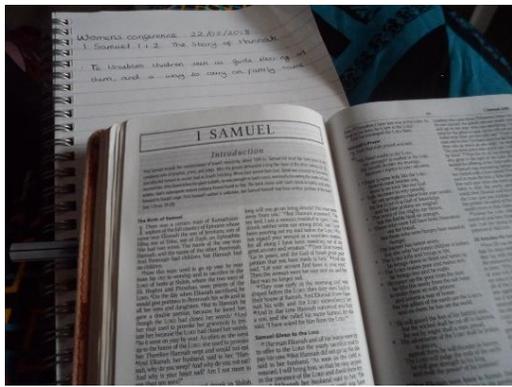
Background

- Previous omission of investigating the role of religion in development
- Lack of understanding of faith based international volunteering
 - Exceptions: Matt Baillie Smith, Nina Laurie and Peter Hopkins
- Contributing to post-secular discourses



Fieldwork

- 3 month ethnographic diary
- 7 longitudinal interviews with volunteers
 - Pre trip interview, 3 interviews during the trip, and 1 post trip interview
 - Volunteers from the UK, Female, ages 18-25
- 14 individual interviews with volunteers
 - Volunteers from the UK and America, Female=12, Male= 6, ages 18-30
- 7 interviews with local missionaries
- 8 interviews with local partners
- 8 interviews with volunteer recruitment organisations
 - Based in UK



Motivations to Volunteer

- Religious Capital: 'skills and experience specific to one's religion including religious knowledge, familiarity with church ritual and doctrine, and friendships with fellow worshippers' (Iannaccone, 1990)
- Spiritual Capital: focuses principally on the transformation of individuals in both a spiritual and personal way through using personal stories and events (Verter, 2003, Baker and Skinner, 2006).



Spiritual capital

- “I know it’s what God wants and that we’re here to serve God” (R12A)
- “I really wanted to do something for God in my gap year” (R13A)
- “I thought I wanted to volunteer but I thought that if you did it for a non-Christian organisation it wouldn’t be the same. This was an opportunity to grow in my faith ” (R14A)

Religious Capital

- Provided the means to volunteer:
- “I had an interview [in church] and we have a church newspaper so I’ve written an article... I’ve been in the church notices, everywhere, every week this is my just giving page if anyone wants to give anything. Then we have a bake sale on Sunday ... Sometimes people have just given me money” (R10A)

“Soft vs Critical” Global Citizenship

- Andreotti (2014) and Nye (2004): Soft vs Critical Global citizenship.
 - Poverty and helplessness vs injustice
- “But I just wanted to buy her duck now” (R13)
- Spiritual capital reducing engagement in international development?



Creation of globally aware citizens

- Agency of giver emphasised over projects of justice
 - Biccum (2007) and Jeferess (2008)
- “Well it didn’t feel like we were doing anything until the pastor said that just to have visitors is a blessing. It’s encouraging to have visitors in one sense, just they’re something else. It’s just so nice to meet with them [church women’s groups]” (R14C)



Creation of globally aware citizens

- Learning narrative as opposed to helping
 - Avoids disappointment
 - Ensures long term engagement
 - Reduces north-south power ideologies
 - “Maybe that is good because otherwise we would go home the saviours” (R13)
 - I think before I thought that the only way to develop, countries like this, was to make them more like our country, and to use our methods and stuff. But now going around ATC I have seen that they have so many good ways.... so international development isn't just about countries like this developing, but us learning about the way they are developing and the methods they are using as well.” (R14)



Hopeful future

- “Yeah, just remembering that all the things that we see that are so awful. Like, it hurts God just as much and God doesn’t like it. But this is a part of a broken world and God will make it right one day when Jesus comes back. Yeah, and it will be fair ” (R13D)
- “seeing things that aren’t fair but remembering from my faith that God knows about everything that’s going on and, yeah, he doesn’t like it, he hates it. And that he will make a difference, he will change it one day” (R14C)

Biblical narratives and international development

- “heaven is perfect, it doesn’t have any poverty or inequality. I want the world to be perfect but its not going to be because only heaven is. So, I mean I know I can’t make it perfect. I guess trying to make it, like a step towards, like it won’t be anywhere near, but trying to get it as close to what heaven is” (R13A).

Present help

- “you also realise how much you can do something about it by praying. It might seem like all I can do is pray, but actually that is so powerful” (R12C)
- “Why does my loving God allow suffering, just because I was seeing suffering so closely for the first time in my life really. That was a very challenging time. I did a lot of prayer and reading the bible and erm, listening... that was a real time of listening and saying God I don't know the answer, tell me.” (R6)

Conclusion and Implications

- Importance of a learning over helping attitude
- Increased education around critical forms of global citizen engagement
- Ensure biblical narratives motivate, rather than deter, international development engagement and action

