

The London School of Economics and Political Science

*Migration with a Mission: Geographies of Evangelical Mission(aries) to
Post Communist Albania*

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of the London School of Economics for the degree of Doctor of
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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

Drawing on eight months of in-depth qualitative research, this thesis examines the geographical trajectories of Evangelical missionaries as they migrate to, and embed themselves in, Albania. Identifying how movement is inherent to what it means to be a missionary, I draw together and extend literature from social and cultural geography, migration studies, sociology, geopolitics and missiology to forge new insights into 'migration with a mission'.

Moving beyond largely historical accounts of missionary lives, this thesis provides a contemporary and intimate portrait of what actually goes in to being a missionary, within the context of migration. It contends that a tendency to allow class, work and economic wealth to organise research has meant that the full implications of participants' religious identities have at times been underdeveloped within migration scholarship. The thesis argues for the importance of addressing this issue, and traces the migration trajectory, from the pre-departure decision to migrate, and the choice of mission destination, to the challenges of missionary life once in Albania. In doing so it examines how missionaries' world-views, beliefs and imaginaries extend, as well as complicate, commonplace ideas found in literature around religion and migration, geopolitics, transnationalism and home.

In addition to revealing the multiple spaces and scales of missionary life unaccounted for within current research, the thesis demonstrates that while missionaries could be considered exceptional, these deeply geographical actors should not be made exempt from greater empirical and theoretical exploration.

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ACRONYMS

AEM	Albanian Evangelical Mission
AEP	Albanian Encouragement Project
AERO	Albanian Evangelical Rural Outreach
AHRC	Arts and Humanities Research Council
CCC	Campus Crusade for Christ
CCOMI	Christian Church Outreach Mission International
DTS	Discipleship Training School
ESRC	Economics and Social Research Council
FRYO	Former Yugoslav Republic Of
ICTs	Information and Communication Technologies
IMC	The International Missionary Council
NP	No Page
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States
WOF	Wings of Friendship
VUSH	Vëllazëria Ungjillore e Shqipërisë (Evangelical Brotherhood)
YWAM	Youth With A Mission

GLOSSARY

<i>Dyqan</i>	Small Shop
<i>Furgon</i>	Minibus
<i>Lajge</i>	Neighbourhood
<i>Leje Qëndrimi</i>	Residence permit

CHAPTER 1

Missionaries: Who Are They?

Fieldnotes, Evangelical Church in Tirana, 11th June 2011

Tears streamed down his face as Edwin,¹ a missionary from Kosovo, visibly struggled to keep a check on his emotion. Using the lectern to steady himself, he addressed the congregation of the church. Men bowed their heads trying to hide their tears, while women put their heads in their hands, and cried quietly. His face crumpled, Edwin composed himself and said, 'Brendan, thank you for your work for God over the last 20 years...I don't know where we would have been without you.' Brendan, the American missionary pastor of the church, was invited to speak, and slowly moved down a side aisle towards the front. His head hung low, when he began to speak it was quietly, and clearly with difficulty. 'I am certain that we will see hundreds and thousands of believers in this country...many people thank us for being here in Albania, but we have to thank you for all you have done in our lives. But I am praying today that every one of us will hear Jesus saying 'thank you'. This is the most important thing. This is my prayer for you...I pray for you not only today but continuously. I'm sorry I'm so emotional.' Again tears tumbled. It seemed that almost all of the two hundred strong congregation had been affected in some way by Brendan's words. Brendan's family were gathered together, and everyone began to pray for them. Flattened palms extended outwards, angled towards the bodies of this missionary family, and it was as if God's power was flowing out and towards them.

This scene captures the intensity of the relationship between Brendan Moore, a missionary pastor, and the congregants of his church in Tirana. Brendan was leaving with his family to undertake a year-long 'sabbatical' away from the mission field.

¹ All the names in this thesis have been changed to protect participants' anonymity.

Labelled as one of the 'pioneers' of the Evangelical mission to Albania, the tears of the congregants attested to the extent to which he would be missed. For Brendan had made an indelible impact on the lives of countless Albanians, leading them to know Christ as their Lord and Saviour. Indeed, he and his family have dedicated 20 years of their lives to evangelism in Albania with this very purpose. And yet Brendan is not a lone figure, rather he is just one of approximately 330 Evangelical missionaries² working in Albania today. Heralding from across the world, missionaries from countries as diverse as South Africa, Korea, Brazil, United States (US), Canada, St Lucia, Germany, the Netherlands, Lithuania, and the United Kingdom (UK) have travelled to, and put down roots in, Albania. These individuals have left friends and family to bring Jesus to the Albanians, longing to see the nation 'reached for Christ'. Working as *inter alia*, evangelists, pastors, teachers, and youth workers, they have migrated away from 'home', in order to 'show people what the Kingdom of God is, and to invite them in' (Ryan). They are, I argue, migrants with a mission.

In recent years academics have increasingly studied the relationship between religion and migration (Levitt, 1998b). Research has focused on how migrants alter the religious landscapes of receiving countries (Peach & Gale, 2003; Bradley, 2007), to what extent religion affects migrant 'incorporation' in the places they move to (Foner & Alba, 2008; Bonifacio & Angeles, 2010), the way that churches and religious organisations (Menjívar, 1999, 2003; Levitt, 2004; Glick Schiller, 2005; Long, 2007; Krause, 2011), as well as belief and praxis (Tweed, 1999; McCarthy Brown, 2001; Allievi & Nielsen, 2003; Kitiarsa, 2010a, 2010b; Sheringham, 2013) can link 'here' and 'there' across transnational space, different flows of religious remittances (Levitt, 1998a; Sheringham, 2010a), and the role of religion in the migratory journey itself (Hagan & Ebaugh, 2003; Hagan, 2008, 2012; Groody, 2008; Groody & Campese, 2008). Amidst this surge in interest however religious missionaries have remained largely unaccounted for. Yet these mobile embodiments of faith are among the oldest transnationals who 'carried work and praxis

² Unfortunately the State Department for Religious Cults was unable to issue figures on the number of foreign Evangelical missionaries residing in Albania. This number is taken from a document explaining the work of the Albanian Encouragement Project (AEP), sent to me by a member of staff at the AEP on 20th April 2011.

across vast spaces before those places became nation-states or even states' (Rudolph, 1997: 1). Indeed, movement is inherent to the very definition of a missionary, and forms the heart of this thesis.

At the same time, where missionary life has been studied, academic accounts have largely taken a historical lens, typically producing accounts of missionaries' role in colonialism (Comaroff & Comaroff 1991; Cooper 2005; Keane 2007; Roberts 2008a), imperialism (Stanley 2001; Porter 2003; Ballantyne 2011; Etherington 2011), slavery (Cinamon, Forthcoming), and their particular conceptions of gender and sexuality (Bowie et al, 1993; Huber & Lutkehabus 1999; Brouwer 2002; Roberts 2002; Semple, 2003; Choi 2009). While such research is of indisputable merit, its historical bias belies the reality that mission remains a contemporary phenomenon. In contrast to the suggestion that the missionary era has subsided (see Siermon-Netto 2003; MacLeod 2004), recent evidence shows that overseas missionary work continues unabated (See Stutzman 1996, 1998, 1999; Glanzer, 2002; Hearn 2002; Pelkmans, 2005; 2006; 2007; 2009; 2010; Pelkmans & McBrien, 2008). Indeed, while it is appropriate to signpost the on-going difficulties surrounding the collection of missionary statistics (see Mandryk, 2010 for a discussion of this), researchers at the Centre for the Study of Global Christianity, at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, found that 'in 2010, Christians from all traditions sent out approximately 400,000 international missionaries' (Johnson et al., 2013: 76). While this is a rough estimate, it gives a sense of the sheer scale of the contemporary Christian worldwide missionary movement. Moreover, missionaries today are going 'from almost every country to all of the world's countries' (see Johnson et al., 2013: 76). Given the prolific nature of this worldwide movement therefore, I argue that it is essential for research to recognise 'mission organisations and missionaries not just as historic relics' but rather 'as important, active, and geographically far ranging actors in the modern world' (Brickell, C, 2012a: 725).

With this in mind, the thesis pulls together these two concerns, and focuses on contemporary missionary lives within the framework of migration. More specifically, it

examines the geographical trajectories of Evangelical missionaries as they migrate to, and embed themselves in, Albania. While Albania is better known for its outstreams of migration, it has also been identified as having received the highest number of Evangelical missionaries per capita of any country in Europe (Stutzman, 1999). This, combined with its important religious history, make it an ideal place to ground this research. At the same time, it moves away from the narrow focus on 'the interaction between missionaries and 'natives', with the resulting effects in the native society' (Hovland, 2006: 198), that the majority of studies around mission have taken. Rather, while recognising that 'missionary movements in history have irrevocably changed the world, not only through the number of Christians but also by the way that they have impacted society' (Kim, 2011: 267), this thesis chooses to focus on the missionaries themselves, and the processes behind, rather than the outcomes of, missionary life (see Pelkmans, 2009). In other words, through a detailed examination of 'migration with a mission', it seeks to offer a window on to who missionaries are, what actually goes in to being an Evangelical missionary abroad, and more broadly how modern faith missions³ are operationalised. To do so it engaged in a multi-sited and multi-scalar analysis which traverses the geopolitical, transnational and domestic to produce an intimate portrait of Evangelical missionaries' migration trajectories.

Migration with a Mission: Missionaries in a Migration Framework

Within the popular imagination missionaries have been the subject of innumerable caricatures (see Hodges, 1978). Whether it be as a man living in a hut in the jungle, about to be devoured by cannibals; a strict spinster working to 'civilize' the primitives; or a red faced individual toting a Bible and preaching 'hell and brimstone', our imaginations have long been excited by these individuals. Rarely however have missionaries been thought of as migrants. Indeed, the conceptualisation of missionaries

³ Within 'faith missions', missionaries are supported solely by voluntary contributions received from supporting churches and friends. Rather than rely on a set salary from an organisation or one church, they are expected to live by faith that God will provide the financial means for the continuation of their mission (Fielder, 1994). I explore this further in Chapter Six.

within a migration framework might at first glance appear strange. This is in part because few studies have yet to place these mobile embodiments of faith within a migration framework (see Wahrisch-Oblau, 2009; Kitiarsa, 2010a, 2010b; Storning, 2012), but also because they are to an extent liminal characters. Indeed, as I discuss further in Chapter Two, it is difficult to categorise them within normative migration language. Yet, and as this thesis will showcase, examining missionaries' lives through the framework of migration encourages the forging of novel and interdisciplinary connections, at the same time as extending and de-stabalising several assumptions held within wider literature around geopolitics, transnationalism and home. Thus, while they are to an extent exceptional, I argue that the contribution of these deeply geographical characters should not be made exempt from greater empirical and theoretical exploration.

The conceptualisation of 'missionary as migrant' first emerged while thinking through academic work around religion and migration. Yet importantly I also found it resonated with the participants themselves. In particular, one encounter at the start of my fieldwork was instrumental in cementing this focus:

Fieldnotes, AEP Office, 26th April 2011

Kenneth is 55. He is married with one grown up daughter and lives in New Jersey. I was introduced to him by Patrick, a staff member at the Albanian Encouragement Project (AEP),⁴ while perusing their small library. I explained to him a little about my research, and how I had become interested in the relationship between mission and movement. It was then that Kenneth said something startling. He used the language of migration to describe himself, telling me: 'I'm a migrant missionary. I would consider myself a religious migrant who's moving for God'.

⁴ The AEP was founded in October 1991 and 'functions as an umbrella organisation for its members and provides a united front before the Albanian government and international agencies' <http://www.aepfoundation.org/aboutus.php>.

Indeed, for Kenneth, as well as a number of the other participants, it was entirely 'natural to see the relation between mission and migration. Mission implies migration' (LaRousse, 2008: 155). Put another way, it was understood that Evangelicalism is not only a religion that is 'made to travel', but also a religion 'that makes people travel too', planting 'migrationary potential in every believer' (Wanner, 2007:12).

Exploring this further I uncovered how movement from one place to another constitutes the very core of what it means to be a missionary. Looking at the 'The Great Commission', which is often cited as the New Testament rallying call for Protestant missions, we see how Jesus proclaimed that 'this Gospel of the Kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come' (Matthew 24:14)⁵. Here the 'nations' that Jesus refers to are not the geopolitical structures that we call countries today, but rather ethnic groups, or what are commonly referred to in Evangelical publications as 'people groups' with distinct cultures (Winter & Koch, 2009:533). When I asked the participants in this study what it meant to be a missionary, typical responses were akin to the description posited by Dominic, an American missionary: 'I think a missionary by definition, needs to be somebody who is going out of his or her home culture, to a foreign culture, with the message of the Gospel.' While some participants argued that in the modern world one need not leave one's own country in order to evangelise to a different 'people group', the majority continued to envisage a missionary as a person who moves beyond their own national borders. In order to explain this, participants often made reference to a diagram in *Perspectives On The World Christian Movement: A Reader* (Winter & Hawthorne, 2009), a popular textbook on missions (see Figure 1.1 Overleaf).

⁵ All Bible quotations are taken from the New International Version (NIV) translation.

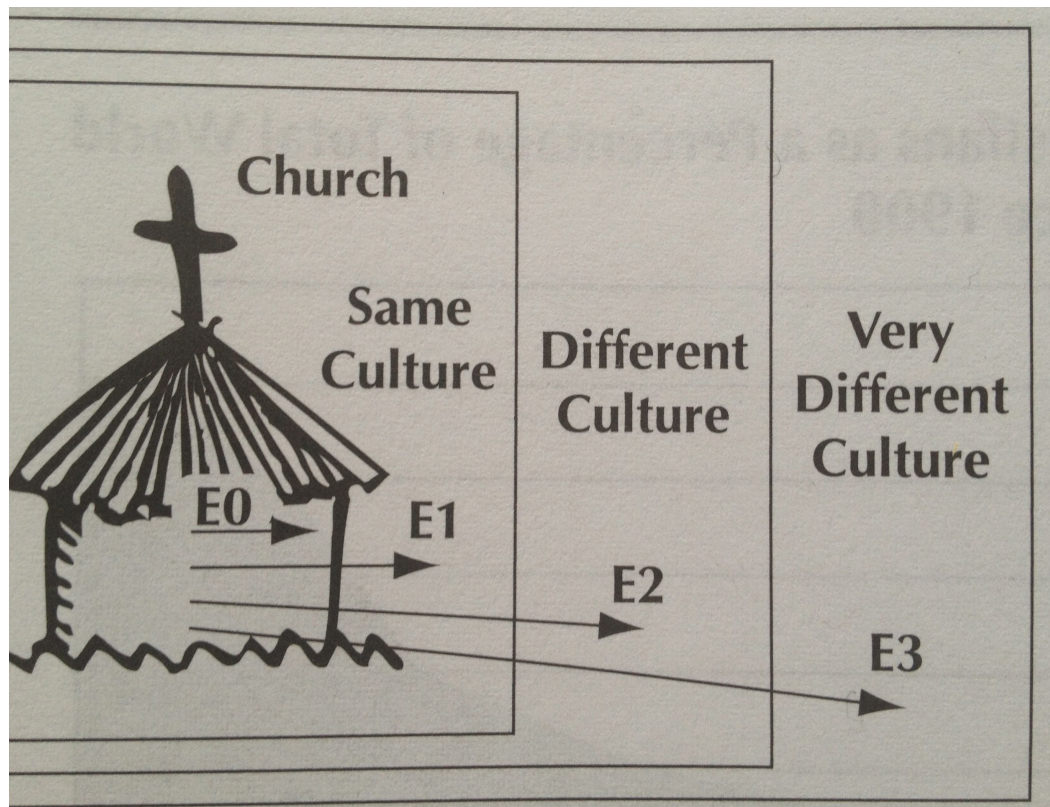


Figure 1.1: Diagram of the 'E-Scale'. (Winter & Koch, 2009: 532)

In it Winter and Koch (2009:532) describe the 'E-Scale', which 'compares the cultural distances that Christians need to move in order to communicate the Gospel'. E0 and E1 are defined as 'mono-cultural', with E0 referring to evangelism amongst church-going Christians, and E1 denoting the spread of the Gospel amongst non-Christians with no contact with the church. Typically, the participants in this study did not classify Christians involved in these 'home-based' activities as missionaries, but rather used the term 'witnesses'. Instead, the most common definition of a missionary that I encountered can be mapped on to E2 and E3, which are classified as cross-cultural activities. E2 refers to evangelism of non-Christians in a similar, but different culture, while E3 denotes evangelising in an entirely different culture,⁶ such as a foreign country. All the foreign missionaries in this study can be classified as E3s, describing themselves as having 'left home'; working as 'cross-cultural workers'; or as having been 'sent out' to Albania. The latter of these draws on the English translation of the Koine Greek word

⁶ Clearly, the notion that cultures can be bounded in this way is highly controversial. Please see Han (2010a) for a discussion of this missionary practice.

apostellos, found in the Bible, which literally means 'sent one'. And it is from this same word (*apostellos*) that we have the modern term 'missionary', which derives from *missionis*, its Latin transliteration. Therefore, as summed up by Donna, an American missionary in Tirana, 'the nature of mission is movement'.

Informed by these insights, the thesis takes the novel approach of positioning missionaries within a migration framework. In doing so it uncovers how Evangelical missionaries' migration trajectories are saturated in a religious world-view, from the decision-making process prior to departure, to their choice of destination, the formation of transnational social relations, and even the construction and maintenance of home once in Albania. To provide a backdrop to this, the following section takes a historical perspective, and provides the reader with a context within which to understand the emergence of the Evangelical mission to Albania.

Evangelical Missionaries and Albania

'God is our greatest enemy. In Albania, belief in God must be plucked out with all its roots by the help of Socialism-Communism. The ideological war against God today in Albania is aiming to liberate people from religious bondage. This is our dream. Down with God! Long live Communism! Atheism is our reason for living'.

(*Scientific Atheism in Albania* quoted in Jacques & Young: NP)

In 1967 Enver Hoxha, the leader of the Communist Party of Albania, declared the country to be 'the first atheist nation in the world'. During 'one of the most brutal dictatorships in Eastern Europe' (Olsen, 2000: 19) he targeted religion in a systematic purge, designed to 'free the people from backwardness, from the shackles of the patriarchal canons, prejudices, religious beliefs and divisions and all the decay of the past' (Hoxha, 1985: 107). Such vilification of religion was to be a staple feature of his just over 40 years in power (1944-1985), as he sought to become the 'worst

enemy' (Lambert, 1999: 303) of believers. This campaign was to have a significant effect on Albania's religious landscape, as staunchly religious people either went underground or disappeared altogether. Yet, as one missionary described it, Albania has gone from being 'one of the most closed and spiritually down trodden places that the modern world has seen' (Brian), to being a 'bustling religious marketplace' (Jambrek, 1997: NP). Further, the missionaries in this study (along with those Evangelical missionaries in Albania not included in the research), add up to the highest ratio of Evangelical missionaries per capita of any other country in Europe (Stutzman, 1999). In order to understand this transition, the following section outlines Albania's religious landscape, and its history of Evangelicalism in particular.

When Hoxha assumed leadership in 1944, the religious traditions present in Albania included: Sunni Muslims and Bektashis, Orthodox, and Catholic Christians. Geographically, the strongholds of each group lay in the middle, the south, and the north of Albania respectively. Affiliation to each of these was shown in 1939 to be 70% Muslim, 20% Orthodox and 10% Catholic (Tarifa & Weinstein, 1995).⁷ The onslaught against these groups first gathered momentum when in 1967 First Secretary Enver Hoxha made a speech encouraging the Albanian youth to shut down churches and mosques across the country by force. As a result, 2,169 religious institutions across Albania were closed, destroyed or converted for other uses. Churches and mosques, for instance, were sometimes turned into cinemas, theatres, stables, or even ice rinks. Following which, on 13th November 1967 Legislative Decree 4337 removed the legal status of religious organisations. As a result, Article 18 of the 1946 constitution of the People's Republic of Albania, which guaranteed freedom of conscience and religion, was made redundant. Solidifying this, the new constitution of 1976 included Article 37, which asserted that, 'The state recognises no religion whatsoever and supports atheist

⁷ The 2011 census included an optional question for participants to acknowledge religious affiliation. Survey results have now been made available, however they are hotly contested, with 20% of respondents declining to answer, confusion over ethnic/religious self-identification and accusations of corruption. Keeping this in mind, the census found that 57% of the population are Sunni Muslims, 10% are Roman Catholic, 7% are Orthodox (the Autocephalous Orthodox Church of Albania), almost 2% are Bektashi with a scattering of believers amongst the 'new' religions.

propaganda for the purpose of inculcating the scientific materialist outlook in people'. In addition, Article 55 made religious activity illegal, and outlawed all manifestations of religion, whether in public or in private. Finally, the Communist regime introduced a new criminal code, which in 1977 declared that any religious activity could be punished by the 'deprivation of liberty' or even death.⁸ While this story of religious persecution is little known, accounts of the time indicate the ferociousness of the attack. Janz (1998: 103 - 104) for example, references a source that estimated that there were 'six prisons, nine concentration camps, and fourteen areas of internal exile for so called 'religious criminals'. In addition Babuna (2003) has reported that of the 300 Catholic priests in the country at the start of Enver Hoxha's regime, only 31 survived (Babuna, 2003).

Hoxha's vitriol was framed by a Communist meta-narrative that envisaged religion, as the opium of the masses, being replaced by Communism as the opium of Marxism-Leninism (Barker, 2000). Within this thinking religion was part of the divisive superstructure of bourgeois Capitalism, and a key challenge to the triumph of Socialism (Miller, 2005). Consequently, Hoxha concluded that modernity would only be possible if there was an 'enormous reduction in the economic, cultural, and spiritual influence of religious institutions' (Fuga, 2006: 52). Following his death in 1985 however, a gradual relaxing in the laws against religious freedom, a growth in general unrest, and a series of riots led by student and professors, led to the complete lifting of the ban against religious practice on May 9, 1990. In the aftermath, numerous accounts described scenes in which Albania was awash with 'worship, services were conducted in the graveyards, on hillsides, and in the open air' (Young, 1997: NP). Having reclaimed their right to religious freedom, members of different faith groups came together to celebrate and worship (Beilmann, 2005). When the Catholic church was preparing to reopen in Shkoder, for example, Muslims as well as Catholics joined forces to make sure it would be ready in time, and five days later the gesture was returned (Vickers & Pettifer, 1997: 99).

⁸ See <http://www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org/uploads/albania.pdf> [Accessed 19th June 2010]

Since this time, Albania's shift from 'the only atheistic country in the world' to one witnessing the 'return of God into the house, the school, and everyday life' (Radu, 2006: 3), has entailed the introduction of a number of 'new' faiths. Albania has been a popular destination choice for missionaries, including Jehovah's Witnesses, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormons), the Bahai, The Word of Life and Jesus' Pupils, jostling alongside Albania's 'traditional' faiths in pursuit of followers. Indeed, of the 6,628 foreign nationals registered with the Department for Law and Migration in November 2011 (*Departamenti i Kufirit dhe Migracionit*), 1,595 were categorised as missionaries, and 429 as humanitarian workers (a popular category also adopted by missionaries). Moreover, as the official I spoke to noted, it was impossible to tell how many of the remaining 4,604 were also missionaries who had chosen to categorise themselves under a different label. Aside from Italian Catholic 'missionaries', who were recognised as part of an established religion in Albania, Evangelicals were widely understood to be one of the largest of the missionary groups. Yet unlike the 'new' faiths aforementioned, Evangelicals hold that they have a history in Albania that begins prior to the collapse of Communism. While there is some ambiguity around the verifiability of this claim, missionaries traced their ancestry in the country back to the Apostle Paul, who is said to have preached in Illyricum, which is modern day Albania. Following this time, it was in 1819 that the British and Foreign Bible Society of London began work to translate the Bible into Albanian, and sent a series of individuals to distribute Protestant literature around the country. Having been befriended by one of these men, an Albanian named Gjerasim Qerasi converted to Evangelicalism, and in 1877 he was examined and accepted into the Evangelical church of Monastir. Hailed as a gifted preacher he began proselytising across Albania, and founded the Vëllazëria Ungjillore e Shqipërisë (VUSH)⁹ (Evangelical Brotherhood), which remains a key organisation for the representation of Albanian Evangelical Christians today.

After Qerasi's death the first long-term foreign Evangelical missionaries, Phineas and Violet Kennedy, arrived in Albania in 1908 under the auspices of the European Turkey Mission, and continued his work in Korca. Following which, others, such as Edwin

⁹ See <https://sites.google.com/site/vushorg/> [Accessed January 3rd 2009]

Jacques,¹⁰ began to arrive. Yet the outbreak of the Second World War, and the Italian occupation of Albania, resulted in the evacuation of all foreign nationals, and in 1940 Jacques was expelled from the country. The work of the Evangelical church in Korca continued under Albanian leadership however, eventually in secret, throughout the war and into the Communist period. While numbers vary according to various sources, it is most commonly thought that only 5 Protestant believers survived to see the return of religious freedom to Albania in 1991. Yet just as with the traditional faiths of Albania, Evangelicalism has been undoubtedly rejuvenated by the arrival of foreign missionaries since 1991 and the fall of Communism.

Besides 'pure evangelism' Evangelical missionaries have established 5 Bible schools, 70 mission agencies,¹¹ child care services, health foundations, schools, summer camps and newspapers. Complementing the work of this influx of long-term missionaries, short-term mission trips also operate in the country. Project AERO, for example, was launched by Campus Crusade for Christ (CCC) in the summer of 1994 with the objective of taking the Gospel to Albania's isolated villages. Equipped with 'The Jesus Film', a documentary film framed around the Gospel of Luke, missionaries invited Albanian villagers to watch and hear the message of the Gospel on hastily erected screens. Using helicopters to navigate their way to these difficult to reach areas, it has been claimed that by 2006 project AERO had reached 179,855 people, covering every village in Albania. Meanwhile, besides witnessing the presence of innumerable groups of short-term missionaries during my fieldwork, I also collected material advertising prayer meetings such as 'Night of Miracles with Marilyn and Sarah', 'Festival of Miracles with Aaron Bagwell', and Evangelical conferences aiming at strengthening and equipping Albanian believers.

¹⁰ Edwin Jacques was a prominent missionary to Albania between 1932 and 1940, and later wrote a somewhat controversial book entitled, *The Albanians: An Ethnic History from Prehistoric Times to the Present*.

¹¹ This is the number of mission organisations and agencies that are advertised as being affiliated with the AEP.

In view of the large numbers of short-term and long-term foreign missionaries working in Albania therefore, the AEP (which plays an important role in this research) was founded in October 1991. Offering a number of services, including help with obtaining a *leje qëndrimi* (residency permit), international post, counselling, a library service, and group discounts, it aims to 'make it as easy as possible for missionaries to come and stay long-term in Albania'.¹² At the same time one of its stated goals is to 'support VUSH in its role as the primary national representative of the Albanian Evangelical community in all its facets'. Indeed, following a joint effort between these two organisations, on 22nd November 2010 the Evangelical Church in Albania signed a bilateral agreement with the government, finally gaining official recognition as a religious community in the country, following over 10 years of campaigning. This is highly significant, since it notionally grants Evangelicals equal status with Muslim, Orthodox and Roman Catholic communities as 'traditional religions'. In addition to which, other benefits include prioritised property restitution, and tax exemptions.

One of the outcomes of these activities has been the conversion of Albanians, 'from five Evangelical believers who survived Communism to over 10,000', according to an article circulated by the AEP in 2010. Indeed, statistics published in *Operation World* (Mandryk, 2010: 94) in 2010 find that 0.5% of the population is now Evangelical, with an annual growth of 4.6% . Meanwhile, a research report commissioned by VUSH and the AEP (2003), and funded by World Vision Albania and the Presbyterian Church (USA), found a rise from 44 Evangelical churches in 1993 to 157 in 2003. Prompted by which, in a promotional video¹³ one prominent Evangelical missionary has asserted that 'Albania is one of the amazing stories of modern mission. I mean, from no churches, to there being churches really in almost every city now.' Further, in contrast to the previous Communist regime, today's 'democratically' elected government has shown little to no resistance to these developments. The State Committee on Cults is responsible for regulating relations between the government and religious communities, and is

¹² AEP Pamphlet

¹³ The video is called *Dispatches from the Front: A Bold Advance*, and is dispatched by Frontline Missions International. See <http://www.dispatchesfromthefront.org>

charged with facilitating the granting of residence permits to foreign employees for various religious organisations. In response to a question I posed to the committee around their attitude to this influx of missionaries, I received the following statement,

‘in respect of the Constitution of the Republic of Albania, which guarantees freedom of religion and the exercise of religion in our country, the government welcomes foreign missionaries’.

In addition, the committee answered that they are keen to recognise ‘the contribution of these missionaries in areas of social activity such as education (schools run by churches and Evangelical organisations now constitute a whole system, starting with elementary to university), health, economics, culture, sports, and humanitarian work’. According to official discourse therefore, the proliferation of Evangelical activity across Albania is a welcome phenomenon. Correspondingly, it was unusual that a missionary encountered difficulty (outside of standard administrative issues) when applying for a *leje qëndrimi* (residency permit) for example. Twenty years after the fall of Communism in Albania therefore, missionaries are not only able to access the country, but also find a far more favourable environment in which to carry out their work.

Research Objectives and Questions

Building on my earlier comments regarding the framing of this research, my interest in the migratory practices and experiences of missionaries crystallised through my own reflections on travelling to, and later living in, Albania. Often when boarding a plane to Tirana I felt like I was the only person who was not ‘on a mission’. Groups of youngsters with bright t-shirts emblazoned with slogans such as ‘Albania for Jesus’ or ‘Shining His Light’, would congregate round their leaders, who often brandished a guitar, seemingly ready to break out into worship. Meanwhile, on the ground in Tirana, Mormons dressed in their distinctive black trousers and crisp white shirts were a regular sighting. It was in fact unusual not to see them on a daily basis, as they walked around the city in twos in search of potential converts. I became increasingly intrigued as to who these people

were, where they were from, and why they had decided to move to Albania. I was also aware of the mounting academic literature on religious globalisation, and yet I noted a paucity of research into these foot soldiers, living mobile embodiments of faith that were working tirelessly to spread their religious message.

During the fieldwork I also spoke with numerous Albanians who shared with me how, with the help of Evangelical missionaries, they had accepted Jesus Christ into their lives. What struck me about their stories was their gratefulness towards them, and their awe that these individuals had left their homes in order to move to Albania and share the Gospel. Indeed, there is a large disjuncture between the flows of missionaries into Albania, and Albanians' desire to leave the country. Consequently, it was often in a thankful, if not disbelieving tone, that 'converted' Albanians spoke about the work that missionaries were doing. Meeting these people showed me part of the 'results' of mission work. While I was interested in exploring this further, these experiences led me to question, what actually goes into impacting Albania's religious landscape in this way? What lies behind the decision to become a 'migrant missionary'? How do missionaries identify their destination? What does the life of a missionary actually look like? What are the relationships that lie behind the figure of the missionary? And how do these relationships influence missionaries' lives, and vice versa? My research seeks to respond to some of these questions as part of a deeper inquiry into the geographical trajectories of contemporary Evangelical missionaries as they migrate to, and embed themselves in, Albania. In particular I ask the following questions:

1. What are the rationales shaping missionaries' migration to Albania?
2. What are the transnational social relations that enable missionaries to migrate to, and live in, Albania, and how (if at all) do they manifest themselves in missionary life?
3. What are the perceived ideals and realities of mission, and how are these experienced and negotiated?

Having initially gone to the field with a broad set of questions around mission and migration, these more specific questions emerged over time as I critically engaged with

what I heard and saw. They follow a migration trajectory, looking not only at the realities of life in Albania, but also decisions made prior to departure. More specifically, question one is sensitive to the world-views, beliefs and imaginaries that inform the rationales behind missionaries' migration to Albania. Question two considers the transnational social relations that facilitate missionaries' migration, and in turn what role they play in missionary life abroad. Meanwhile question three takes a broader lens to draw further attention to the mediated nature of missionary lives, and in particular how disjunctures between the perceived ideals and realities of mission are grounded, experienced and negotiated. Exploring these lines of inquiry, I undertook 8 months of research with Evangelical missionaries living across Albania, and utilised a qualitative and mixed method approach. Emerging from which I was led to engage with numerous bodies of literature from across the social sciences and missiology including, but not limited to, theory around migration decision-making, work on geopolitical imaginaries and religion, the relationship between geopolitics and migration, transnational migration, the concept of proximity/distance, and research around 'home'. Consequently, this thesis journeys across numerous spaces and scales of missionary life as part of its examination of 'migration with a mission'.

Outline of Chapters

In **Chapter Two** I introduce both the main debates that informed the research, and the key concepts upon which I have drawn. More specifically, I begin by positioning the missionary both within migration framework more generally, and religion and migration in particular. Focusing on the latter, I argue that the majority of research has, to date, produced only a limited portrayal of the intersections between religion and migration, undercut by a bias towards studying immigrant lives, and a failure to take seriously participants' religious identities. Having outlined how this thesis critically responds to these trends, I go on to pull together work from not only geography, but also the wider social sciences and missiology and discuss three further bodies of literature which inform this thesis: missionary geopolitics and migration; transnationalism and proximity/distance; and home. Each of which corresponds to the organisation of the following

chapters, which traverses the geopolitical, transnational and domestic scale to produce original insights into the interconnections between religion and the migration trajectory.

Chapter Three outlines the research design that I constructed. In addition to locating the research, providing a profile of the participants and detailing my choice of methods, I also discuss four key issues surrounding the research process. First, I consider the problem of 'translation', and outline my approach to writing about religious lives. Second, I detail the difficulties of engaging with a 'closed community', and suggest three strategies, including 'interface ethnography' (Ortner, 2010: 213), finding a 'man of peace' and using emotion as data. Third, I reflect on my own positionality within the research, and in what ways it has impacted on what I have produced. Finally, I discuss the important issue of power and representation, and argue for further recognition of the way in which participants can influence the research process, not only in terms of the undertaking of the research itself, but also how it is written up.

In **Chapter Four** I begin the first of four empirical chapters by using life-focused interviews to produce an in-depth examination of the reasons why participants decided to migrate abroad as overseas missionaries. More particularly, I consider normative economic conceptualisations of 'rationality', often found in migration theory around decision-making, within the context of this case. In doing so I find that what unites missionaries' trajectories is not an economic imperative, but rather a religious one. Drawing on insights from the participants, and joining with other academics, I go on therefore to argue for the importance of recognising alternative migration rationalities, and in particular a 'religious rationale' grounded in obedience, duty and love.

Unlike the majority of research which looks at Albania as a sending country, in **Chapter Five** I move on to examine Albania as migration destination. Drawing on empirical material gathered throughout the fieldwork process, I discuss the role and positioning of Albania within the Evangelical world-view, and consider how this has, to an extent,

informed missionaries' choice of mission destination. I find that Albania occupies a specific place within the geopolitical imaginations of Evangelicals. More specifically, I contend, first, that missionaries were initially attracted to service in Albania because of the legacy of Communism and Islam, which are envisioned as antithetical to God. Second, that the influence of Islam in Albania is depicted in two separate discourses, as either rendering the country a 'Muslim majority' or 'Third Culture Kid'. And third, that Albania is perceived as a highly strategic country in the bid to evangelise the 'Muslim world' because of both its geographic location, and the religious identity of Albanians themselves. Consequently I make the original link between, and demonstrate the productivity of, bringing literature from across religion and geopolitics, missionary geopolitics and the geopolitics of migration into conversation.

Chapter Six turns to address the second question undergirding this research, and focuses on missionaries' transnational social relations, and how they manifest themselves in missionary life in Albania. It begins by examining how missionaries develop and maintain their support networks, focusing on the vast distances that they travel, and their desire to bring people 'into relationship' with Albania. Next, I trace how this wider social field manifests itself in the everyday lives of missionaries in Albania, using the lens of prayer and 'performance Christianity'. In the former I find that supporters 'at home' are seen as an intrinsic part of the mission work force, petitioning God with their prayers for change in Albania. In particular, I argue that Evangelicals' conception of a transcendent God enables supporters' prayers to bypass the constraints of space/time in order to play an active role in reinforcing the work of missionaries abroad. In the latter, I examine how technology has facilitated the easy exchange of information between missionaries and their supporters, leading to a rise in what one participant called 'performance Christianity'. Unpacking this, I find that while technological advancements have afforded supporters a larger window onto missionary life, what they see is to an extent curated. Looking at two mediums, Facebook and electronic prayer letters, I show how some participants modify their output, presenting aspects of their life that fit what they perceive as supporters' expectations of 'the good missionary'. Running contrary to much of the literature around transnational migration,

wherein 'proximity is felt to be obligatory, appropriate or desirable' (Urry, 2002: 258), I thus signal how spatial distance is in some cases not only preferable, but also productively used to maintain 'proximal' transnational relationships. Taken together with the chapter's earlier focus on prayer therefore, I signpost how missionaries complicate geographical thinking.

In **Chapter Seven** I move from the geopolitical and transnational to the domestic, through a focus on the missionary home. By critically engaging with this space I build on the previous chapter to expose disjunctures between the perceived ideals and lived realities of mission. To do so I begin by elucidating a shift in mission theory away from 'civilization' to today's emphasis on 'contextualisation', and make the general argument that the missionary home reflects these moves in miniature. I contend that the missionary home is, in other words, a microcosm of ideas on how mission work should be carried out in practice. I discuss how the 'contextualisation' ideal manifests itself in politics around the location and quality of the missionary home, as well as the way that it is decorated. In doing so I draw out the materiality of the missionary home, and how it connects not only to broader mission theory, but also how it is personally experienced by the missionaries themselves. In addition, I consider heaven as home, and question the assumption found in much literature on home that 'homeliness' is a universal goal.

Finally **Chapter Eight** returns to the thesis' contention, that movement is inherent to the very definition of the missionary, and reflects on the resonance of this for the missionaries themselves. It signals the contributions to knowledge made by the thesis, and outlines the specific findings in relation to the broader research objective and its attendant questions. Lastly, the chapter pauses to reflect on how some of the key findings of the thesis could be built upon in future research.

Situating the Missionary: Religion and Migration from the Geopolitical to the Transnational and Domestic

As Levitt (2003: 847) attests, the ties between religion and migration have 'a long history. Abraham began a journey, guided by his faith, that millions have followed'. Indeed, Christianity is dominated by a discourse of expansion, facilitated by the movement of faithful individuals over the centuries, who trace their missionary call back to Abraham and The Great Commission. Yet despite the simplicity of this link, 'the critical role that the rising tide of migration [has] played in the nature and scope of the western missionary movement is little recognised' (Hanciles, 2008a: 121). Indeed, it is only in the past 5 years that missionaries have begun to be examined within the migration framework. Building on this emerging literature, the thesis positions contemporary Evangelical missionaries within a framework of migration, and examines their geographical trajectories as they migrate to, and embed themselves in, Albania. In order to provide a backdrop to my findings, this chapter sets the scene by reviewing the literature that I draw upon in later chapters. As I introduced in Chapter One, in examining missionaries' migration trajectories several spaces and scales emerged as salient, and each demanded a distinct intermelding of literatures. Indeed, I was led to critically engage with work from not only geography, but also the wider social sciences and missiology. Key themes clustered around broader bodies of literature concerned with migration and geopolitics, transnationalism and home, within and between which I was led to draw connections. As this Chapter will demonstrate therefore, in order to think through 'migration with a mission', it has been necessary to pull diverse literatures into conversation. This is reflected in the organisation of this chapter, and the thesis more widely, which moves between the geopolitical, transnational and domestic scale, pulling in different spaces of missionary life.

To start this chapter however, I begin by providing the reader with an understanding of the existing research around religion and migration, within which this thesis is more broadly couched. I argue, first, that to date this literature has been dominated by a narrow focus on immigrant lives. While worthwhile, I suggest that current research has subsequently produced only a limited portrayal of the intersections between religion and migration, focusing on themes commonly associated with immigrants, such as sources of support and questions of assimilation or incorporation. I signpost therefore how this thesis contributes to widening both the actors considered, and issues examined, within this body of literature. Second, I contend that having adopted this limited purview, the full implications of religious identities have yet to be uncovered. Taking this insight forward, I introduce an emerging pocket of research around 'new mission churches'. Once regarded as places of ethnic consolidation, researchers have recently shown how by taking religious identities seriously, and listening to immigrants' self-understanding as missionaries, normative (im)migrant/expatriate narratives are complicated. Again, this foregrounds the following thesis' commitment to allowing 'religion to speak back' (Yorgason & della Dora, 2009: 629), and thus informs both the construction and content of this study. Further to which, I discuss the difficulties of placing my participants within a migration framework, and consider how best to position them.

Having outlined these broad contributions, I go on to discuss, in sequence, the literatures that inform each Chapter. Beginning with Chapter Five, I start by examining literature around *Missionary Geopolitics and Migration*. More specifically I discuss, in turn, research into religion and geopolitics, missionary geopolitics, and the geopolitics of migration. Noting not only the dearth of research in each area, but also the complete lack of work that links them, I signpost how, as part of this thesis' examination of the rationales shaping missionaries' migration to Albania, I make the original contribution of drawing connections between each body of literature, bringing them into productive tension. Next, I turn to discuss the transnational 'optic' in further detail, which is evoked in Chapter Six as part of a wider exploration of the social relations that enable missionaries to migrate to, and live, abroad. In particular, I begin by focusing on the use

of three key concepts, *remittance*, *network* and *social field*, within literature examining how religion straddles borders. Further, I introduce the geographical concept of proximity/distance, which I later draw upon, and argue that despite an emphasis in transnational literature on the positives of overcoming spatial distance, it can actually be harnessed productively to maintain 'proximal' transnational relationships. Following which, I move from the geopolitical and transnational to the domestic scale. Indeed, home emerged as an important space for thinking through disjunctures between the perceived ideals and lived realities of mission. In view of which, in the penultimate section of this chapter I elucidate how despite a rise in interest in 'home', and the myriad identity frames through which it has been examined, academics have remained largely silent on the relationship between religion and home. Having outlined the little work that has been done in this area, I go on to discuss two important themes for the thesis: *Home as Spectacle* and *Home and Materiality*. Drawing on insights from the geographies of home literature, and more specific studies of home and migration, I underline the novel approach that Chapter Seven takes in its exploration the missionary home. Finally, I draw the chapter to a close with a summary of where and how each literature is evoked, signposting their contribution to the research questions.

Religion, Migration and The Missionary: Positioning the Missionary

This thesis is set against the wider backdrop of research into religion and migration. Academic work around this relationship can be first traced back to studies looking at how migration impacts on the religious landscapes of immigrant destinations. Exemplary of which, Bradley (2007) examined how religious diversity resulting from immigration recast Britain's national identity into one of multiple religious sensibilities, while Peach and Gale (2003) focused on the spatial and architectural imprint of religious immigrants in England. At the same time, and catalysed by mass immigration to the United States in recent years, research has also become increasingly concerned with understanding 'how religious affiliation and participation help immigrants face the challenges of adaptation in a new land' (Hagan, 2008: 5). For example, key themes have included the extent to which immigrant religion is a bridge or barrier to inclusion

in the host country (Foner & Alba, 2008; Bonifacio & Angeles, 2010), and the role of in situ religious institutions in providing economic and social support (Warner & Wittner, 1998; Kemp & Rajman, 2003; Hirschman, 2004; Ley, 2008; Sheringham 2010a, 2010b). In her discussion of Brazilian migrants in London, for example, Sheringham (2010a) emphasizes migrants' claims that the spiritual nourishment they receive in church helps them to mediate and live through difficult circumstances as underprivileged migrants abroad. Meanwhile, as part of their focus on Latin American Evangelical churches that have mushroomed in Israel, Kemp and Rajman (2003) reveal how religious institutions also play an important role in migrants' lives beyond the spiritual realm. For instance, they argue that these churches provide 'protected space where undocumented migrants under the constant threat of deportation acquire a public presence of some sort' (Kemp & Rajman, 2003:296). Similarly, Menjivar's (2006) study also alludes to the political significance of religious institutions, as she examines how for (il)legal Salvadoran and Guatemalan migrants in the US, churches are considered as safe spaces for community gatherings.

In recent years however wider research on international migration has been highly influenced by the 'transnational turn' (Faist, 2004: 11). This optic has been enthusiastically received across the social sciences as a useful, if not necessarily new (Foner, 1997; Portes, 2003) way to investigate the 'multiple ties and interactions linking people or institutions across the borders of nation-states' (Vertovec, 1999: 447). Indeed, it has been so widely taken up that as King (2012: 144) wryly comments, you can have almost 'transnational anything you-want'. Yet transnationalism is intrinsically a 'geographical term, centrally concerned with reconfigurations in relations with place, landscape and space' (Jackson et al., 2004: 4), and as such it is unsurprising that geographers have been keen to adopt this lens in their research. Indeed, this is none the more obvious than in the field of migration, where following the 'cultural turn', cultural and social geographers have been chipping away at a field once considered the traditional bastion of population geographers. Within this stream of scholarly activity, 'the bulk of research has focused on [under privileged and low skilled] migrants who are moving from developing countries to western industrialised ones' (Walsh,

2006a: 269) on the one hand, and on the other, the circulation of high waged professionals and managerial elites (see Beaverstock, 2002, 2005, 2011; Scott, 2004). These streams of research are associated with what are widely referred to as geographies of transnationalism 'from below' and 'from above' respectively (see Jackson et al, 2004 for discussion of these terms). To counteract this bias, Conradson and Latham (2005: 229) have also called for scholars to investigate 'middling' forms of transnationalism, arguing that it encompasses 'many more people than just the transnational elites and the developing world migrants who have been the focus of so much transnational research'. This has led to research into new 'characters' such as middle class expatriate workers (Walsh, 2006a, 2006b, 2011; Butcher, 2009), lifestyle migrants (Clarke, 2005; Benson & O'Reilly, 2009a, b), backpackers (Allon & Anderson, 2010), and students (Collins, 2010). Moving across the spectrum of transnationalism 'from below', the 'middle' and 'above' (see Jackson et al, 2004 for discussion), class, work and economic wealth have therefore been important identity markers in the organisation and analysis of transnational migration to date.

Meanwhile, in 2002 Ebaugh and Chafetz (2002: 3) argued that 'whilst studies of transnationalism have increased in the past several decades, one dimension of the process has been virtually neglected: the role of religion'. In recent years however, and as Sheringham (2010b: 1685) signposts, conceptualisations of transnational migration's relationship with religion have begun to enjoy attention, 'from the global, to the local and institutional, to the informal and everyday'. Yet just as with wider transnational migration research, I argue that the majority of studies have zoomed in on the migration experiences of immigrants and labour migrants. Moreover, while criticising previous research, which trained its gaze solely on the role of religion in the lives of migrants in their host country, this new stream of transnational research often continues to frame discussion around 'the role of religion in immigrant incorporation, with an eye toward explaining how religious affiliation and participation help immigrants face the challenges of adaptation in a new land' (Hagan, 2008: 5). Indeed, whereas previous research into religion and migration was concerned with examining how religious belief and praxis aided or abetted assimilation in situ, today some studies continue to ask

much the same question, but with an eye to transnational connections. For example, Levitt (2004) has examined how extended, negotiated and recreated transnational religious organisations facilitate migrants' simultaneous connection to their sending community and incorporation in the US to different degrees. In addition, religious institutions, practices, beliefs, and the connections they engender to 'home' are often considered a 'resource' upon which migrants draw as they try to position themselves in their new host society in different ways. Put another way, accounts are often concerned with demonstrating how religion can 'be thus empowering and constraining, a catalyst for incorporation and resistance at the same time' (Levitt, 2008: 40).

Given this bias for studying the 'lower' end of the spectrum, the experiences of 'middle' and 'upper' mobile religious people, such as religious businessmen (see Yamamori & Eldred, 2003; Cunfu & Huang, 2004), companies (Rundle & Steffen 2003), and religious leaders (Kitiarsa, 2010a; 2010b), are currently largely absent from research into the relationship between religion and transnational migration. More importantly however, I argue that despite calls for 'religion to be acknowledged fully, and in like manner alongside race, class and gender in geographical analysis' (Kong, 2001a: 212), in the case of research into transnational migration and religion, class (and race/ethnicity, a point which I expand upon later) remain the dominant variables. Taking missionaries as a case in point, these figures draw from a range of backgrounds, and are typically entirely funded by donations. Consequently they do not uniformly belong to either a lower, middle, or upper social class, causing them to fall out of this framework of categorisation. Indeed, their common denominator is not class, wealth or even ethnicity, but rather their religious identities. Within literature on migration only a handful of studies have chosen to take this seriously, and allowed participant's espousals of religious identity, belief and practice to actually organise their accounts. In particular this thesis takes inspiration from a pocket of literature that has begun to emerge in the last five years, which (re)examines what are typically referred to as 'migrant churches'. As the next section will argue, these studies have made two important contributions to wider research around migration. First, they present a challenge to normative migration narratives by drawing attention to the way in which

religious identities allow underprivileged migrants to defy characteristics typically associated with the figure of the (im)migrant. Consequently, they signpost the importance of being fully attentive to religious identities. Second, this cluster of research has shown how for some individuals the entire migration experience is filtered through a religious lens that saturates every stage of the migration journey. This thesis builds on these important insights, which I explore further in the following section. After which I move from considering 'migrants as missionaries' to examining the limited work that has coalesced around the theme of 'traditional'¹⁴ missionaries as a form of migrant.

'New Mission Churches': Migrants as Missionaries

The term 'migrant churches' has become common parlance in research into immigrant religion. Until recently these churches were consistently framed as playing an important role in immigrants' lives by 'maintaining ethnicity and preserving traditions' (Han, 2005: 3). Indeed, policy-makers and researchers alike have been keen to investigate these institutions, constructing a discourse that represents them as places of ethnic consolidation, and a home away from home that 'helps migrants to cope with a strange and hostile society' (Knibbe, 2009). Brodwin (2003), for example, studied Haitians in Guadeloupe, and argued that the construction of Haitian churches represented an attempt to overcome feelings of marginalisation and dislocation. Yet in the midst of this research there were clues that an entirely different dynamic was afoot. As Glick Schiller (2006: 615) rightly points out, for example, several studies have downplayed or simply ignored the important implications of migrants' claims to a Christian identity (see Hunt & Lightly, 2001; Adogame, 2002; Menjivar, 2003; Van Dijk, 2004). Indeed, as this section examines, rather than bunking down and seeking solace alongside fellow ethnic believers, there is evidence that there needs to be a shift from thinking about migrants', 'chiefly as objects of charity and outreach, to viewing them as potential leaders and teachers in mission and missionary movements' (Pohl, 2003: 10).

¹⁴ By 'traditional' I mean individuals engaged in 'long-term' mission abroad, who departed under the banner of the missionary.

Missiologists and academics agree that Christian mission is no longer the reserve of western missionaries (see Koning, 2009; Kalu et al., 2010; Asamoah-Gyadu, 2012; Adogame & Shankar, 2013). Rather, given the growth of Christianity in Latin America, Africa and areas of Asia, missionaries are now moving from 'everywhere to everyone' (Escobar, 2003). In particular, research has highlighted the phenomenon of 'receiving mission', 'reverse mission', or 'mission in reverse' (see Burgess, 2011; Kim, 2011; Knibbe, 2009, 2011). These terms describe 'the Evangelical and missionary zeal of the formerly missionised to reawaken Christianity in the former 'Christian West' (Adogame & Shankar, 2013: 1). Unlike the missionaries in this study however, who left their homes under the banner of the missionary, Hanciles (2008b:127) underlines that this movement is spearheaded by 'the swelling tide of guest workers, students, labour migrants, asylum seekers and political and economic refugees, and family members of previous migrants are innumerable Christians, each one of which is some sense a missionary' (see also Ybarrola, 2012). Similarly veteran missiologist Samuel Escobar (2003: 66), in his book *The New Global Mission: The Gospel from Everywhere to Everywhere*, insists that 'migrants who travel in search of economic survival carry the Christian message and missionary initiative with them'. In other words, while mission might not be the reason that these migrants leave home, they are nonetheless mobile embodiments of faith, with the potential to behave as missionaries by disseminating their beliefs abroad.

In particular, within missiology and the social sciences more broadly, migrant churches (an increasingly contested term), or what have more recently been referred to as 'new mission churches' (Wahrisch-Oblau, 2009), have been identified as key sites for the fermentation and enactment of this missionary narrative and praxis. Han (2005), for example, has undertaken a case study of a Korean protestant church in North America. Drawing on Massey's (1994) concept of 'extroverted space' (Han, 2005: 32), she argues that rather than being inward looking, the church in her study was engaged in numerous outreach activities. Building on which she has argued for a re-conceptualisation of the church 'as not only a space that gathers or congregates, but a space that mobilizes dynamic and outward trajectories' (Han, 2005: 32). In other words,

and again utilising Massey (1991), the church had a profoundly 'global sense of space' that demands classification not as an ethnically bound enclave, as might usually be suggested, but as a hot house of migrant missionary activity (Han 2005; see also Wanner 2007). Indeed, several studies have uncovered how churches established and attended by migrants are working to proselytise in their host countries. The majority of these have focused on churches established by African migrants, and have looked at their role in the religious transnationalisation of African churches in diaspora (Adogame, 2008); proselytising activities (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2010) and how they interact with their host communities more generally (Glick Schiller, 2006; 2008c; 2009).

At the same time as doing the work of debunking outdated conceptualisations of migrant churches (see Adogame, 2008; Asamoah-Gyadu, 2012) however, I argue that this emerging research has also made an important contribution to migration studies more widely. Through the use of in-depth qualitative methods, several studies have revealed how by taking religious identities seriously, normative ways of thinking about immigrants are being challenged. Adding rich qualitative evidence to the contention that 'over the past century, the centre of gravity in the Christian world has shifted inexorably Southward' (Jenkins 2002: 2), Wahrisch-Oblau (2009), for instance, examines how migrants construct their missionary biographies, and how they conceptualise and practice evangelism in cities across Germany. Following White and Jackson's (1995: 115) earlier call for scholars to 'question the ideological construction of social categories and seek to uncover the material interests that such categorisations inevitably serve', Wahrisch-Oblau (2009) deftly shows how the narratives of these migrants pull apart many of the assumptions behind the characterisation of migrants/immigrants and expatriates. For while 'the dominant discourse would assign the interviewees to the 'migrant type'....their narratives do not fit the structure of the migrant/immigrant narrative. They are not narratives of a search for a better life, and of a struggle for integration' (2009: 139). Instead, they view themselves as God-ordained agents of change, as missionaries called to Germany with a divine purpose.

Indeed, Wahrisch-Oblau's (2009) finding chimes with that of several other studies. While undertaking research into African Christians in Amsterdam, for instance, Knibbe (2009) interviewed the Nigerian Pentecostal pastor of the Jesus House for All Nations. He explained to her, 'I wasn't coming here as a refugee. I wasn't coming here to improve my life [laughs]. I'm sorry; I need to put that into perspective. Often, the general impression is that people are coming here for a better life...we did not come here to be tenants; we came here to be landlords' (Knibbe, 2009: 145). Meanwhile, in his seminal work, *Beyond Christendom: Globalisation, African Migration, and the West*, Hanciles (2008b) argues that African migrants constitute the making of a new missionary movement. More specifically, he contends that while the majority of Africans might not leave home as missionaries, they can and do come to identify themselves as missionaries. To illustrate this point he includes the sentiments of a pastor from Liberia who was visiting the United States in 1990. While he was in the U.S a civil war broke out and he found himself stranded as a refugee. Yet rather than imagine himself as vulnerable, the pastor decided to interpret this turn of events as divinely ordained, and proclaimed to himself and all others in a similar situation, 'don't be refugees, be missionaries!' (Hanciles, 2008b:330).

In addition, in a study of four different Brussels-based Pentecostal congregations, Maskens (2012) found a similar trend. He argues that even in cases where movement was not initially propelled by divine ambition, migration is often the subject of a later religious interpretation (see also Pype et al., 2012: 356). This was exemplified by the accounts of two African Pentecostal ministers who looked to separate themselves from other migrants by emphasising their missionary motivations. As Maskens (2012: 6) explains, 'these ministers distance themselves from the logic of dependency which is often associated with people from the south in Europe: they are bearers of a message which they feel is decisive for Europe'. Finally, in a series of landmark studies with born-again Christians in Germany and the US, Glick-Schiller (2006; 2008a; 2008b; 2008c; 2009) draws on rich empirical material to show that by defining themselves as missionaries, Pentecostal migrants refused to be conditioned by dehumanising policies. Instead they became active participants in their host societies, organising

and promoting religious events and inviting the public to participate in not only their churches' activities, but also wider transnational networks of born again believers. Strikingly, in her case study from America, migrants who formed part of a powerful local prayer network were even courted by city and state politicians as active and influential members of the community. Indeed, this was despite the fact that several of them did not actually hold the legal right to remain in the country.

Summing up this tide of thought then, in an edited volume published in 2013, Adogame and Shankar provocatively titled a section of their book, 'Religious Islands or Innovators: Immigrant Practices and Perspectives'. For while writers within the theology of migration have been concerned with how best to serve (Groody, 2008; Groody & Campese, 2008; Spencer, 2008; Tulud-Cruz, 2008, 2010; Myers & Colwell, 2012), and proselytise to immigrants (Payne, 2012), emerging research instead points to the ways in which such individuals use a missionary self-understanding to complicate and subvert these narratives. This finding is extremely important for this thesis, since it exposes the 'risks of downplaying migrants' own religious logic' (Karagiannis & Glick-Schiller, 2006: 144). At the same time, these studies have shown how the migration experience comes to be (re)interpreted through a religious lens. Building on these insights, the thesis places religious subjectivities at its heart, and takes seriously the world-views, beliefs and imaginaries of its participants, in order to allow new insights into the intersections between religion and migration to emerge.

Missionaries as 'Migrants'

The migration experiences of contemporary missionaries have been largely silenced within academic research. At the same time, while a budding body of literature on the theology of migration has alluded to the fact that missionaries are in fact a form of migrant (see Naish, 2008), next to no studies have explored the implications of this. Indeed, knowing how to place the missionary within a migration framework is challenging. As we saw in the previous section, individuals' religious self-identification

complicated the normative immigrant narratives that might otherwise have been attributed to them. In the same way, and as I allude to in Chapter Seven, in the case of 'traditional' missionaries, the expatriate narrative with which they are usually associated is also complicated. As Wahrish-Oblau (2009: 137) explains, the term expatriate carries with it connotations of 'wealth, power, and glamour. Expatriates move as an act of agency. They go to a foreign country (usually from the north to other parts of the world), with a sense of purpose, to do a certain job, to live out an ideal'. While on the one hand this description neatly fits the missionary, since he or she migrates with a clear idea of what they want to achieve and why, on the other, images of splendour are ill-fitting. Further, in her landmark study of expatriate lives in Jakarta, Fechter (2007: Preface) found that expatriates are often consumed by the need to create boundaries between themselves and their host community:

'Wherever expatriates were, whatever they did, boundaries seemed to be the key to understanding their lives. These were boundaries between the orderly insides of their houses and the chaotic streets, between Western food served at home and street vendors' fare outside, and between the cocooned expatriate communities and a sprawling third-world city which surrounded them'.

As research into expatriate lives has gathered momentum, several studies have reached a similar conclusion (see Beaverstock, 2002; 2005; Scott, 2004). Yet, as I will flesh out further in Chapter Seven, missionaries strived to create proximity between themselves and their hosts. Missionaries therefore represent an unusual type of migrant, that is difficult to classify within current migration language. And yet, I argue that while they are to an extent atypical, they should not be overlooked within research. Instead, as this literature review demonstrates, the study of missionary lives engenders fresh interdisciplinary connections, which as the following chapters explore further, destabilises several assumptions held within literature around transnational migration, as well as 'home'. With this in mind, I will now turn to review the limited work that has addressed missionary lives within the general context of mobility or migration, and signpost an emerging cluster of research around short-term mission.

As Kitiarsa rightly argues, 'previous studies on the transnational religious sphere, which include migrants' religious identities, neglect the integral roles played by priests and religious specialists' (Kitiarsa, 2010a: 263). To rectify this bias Kitiarsa focuses on religious practitioners rather than believers or followers (2010a, 2010b), and examines the transnational religious mobilities of what she refers to as Thai migrant monks. In particular, she argues that their cross border mobility is largely responsible for shaping Singapore's religious landscape, and traces monks' role in officially sanctioned efforts to disseminate Theravadan Buddhism. Yet rather than dwelling on the outcome of this missionary activity alone, Kitiarsa (2010a) also momentarily pauses to ask, just 'who are the 80 or so Thai Buddhist monks doing religious missionary work in Singapore? What are their backgrounds? And what are their actual activities?'. While Kitiarsa provides little in way of an answer, her questions are nonetheless important for gaining insight into the operation of mission, and the personal experiences of missionaries themselves.

Indeed in her examination of the migration of Catholic nuns to Africa for example, German historian Katharina Stornig (2012) looks to do just this. Tracing the historical processes that led to their migratory moment, Stornig (2012) steeps her account in the context of women's prior subordination to men, and deftly argues that 'migration empowered these women in an essentially religious sense because it made them missionaries'. Just as in the previous section therefore, identification as a missionary brought with it personal transformation and empowerment. Meanwhile, Psychologists Navara and James (2002; 2005) have also been interested in elucidating the personal facets of undertaking mission abroad. Using quantitative methods, they have compared missionaries' levels of 'acculturation stress' with other sojourners, and found that missionaries reported less satisfaction in their posting than expatriates, largely due to their increased contact with host nationals. Taken together these studies offer a portrait of the personal lives of contemporary missionaries, and their experience of migration. While useful, they are however limited compared to the richness of the large number of historical studies looking at missionary life. Indeed there is, I argue, a lacuna in research which recognises missionaries as 'important, active, and geographically far ranging actors in the modern world' (Brickell, C, 2012a: 734).

Addressing this gap, 'short-term mission' in particular has become an increasing focus of research in recent years (Priest & Howell, 2013; see also Han, 2011). Zehner (2013), for example, has noted that between 2000 and 2012, 56 books, articles, doctoral dissertations, and journal issues were published in English around the topic. While not dissimilar from what has become known as 'service tourism' or 'voluntourism', Howell (2012: 20) defines these trips as 'short-term travel experiences for Christian purposes such as charity, service or evangelism'. What sets this 'fusion of voluntarism, tourism, and evangelism' (Hancock, 2013: 305) apart from other secular trips therefore, is their religious motivation, which colours what they do, and why and how they do it. The popularity of these trips has grown exponentially over the past two decades, and while America remains the largest short-term mission sending country, Christians across the world are also booking flights, and taking boats, trains and buses to travel to foreign countries, hoping to 'bring people from other places into the literal and figurative boundaries of Christianity' (Gallaher, 2010: 220). It is therefore timely that not only missiologists, but also academics from within geography, anthropology and sociology 'are starting to ask how this form of travel is transforming those going and those receiving' (Priest & Howell, 2013: 127).

Beginning with a paper from within the sociology of religion, Wuthnow and Offutt (2008) have included 'religious workers' within a catalogue of transnational religious connections. Signposting the size of the missionary movement, and the kinds of transnational links engendered by these characters, they cite figures collected by Protestant mission agencies and denominations in 2001 which 'showed that there were 42,787 US citizens working full time as missionaries in other countries, representing an increase of approximately 16 per cent over the previous decade, and significantly higher than the comparable numbers in the 1950s which is often assumed as the height of overseas missionary endeavours' (Wuthnow & Offut, 2008:216). Meanwhile, it is reported that in the Global Issues Survey, 74 percent of US church members claimed that they or their congregation had financially contributed to mission work in another country in the past year (Wuthnow & Offut, 2008:217). Clearly this information is highly useful, and the recognition of missionaries as a form of 'transnational connection' is

important given the dearth of scholars working on this topic. Yet the paper would have been improved by moving beyond figures to thinking about what contribution the study of missionaries could make to furthering our understanding of transnational religious lives. Informed by which, I take up this question in Chapter Six through an examination of missionaries' transnational social relations, and how they become manifest in missionary life in Albania.

On a different tack, a team of Geographers have undertaken an AHRC and ESRC funded project examining what happens to the religious identities and spiritual outlooks of young Evangelical Christians as a result of their participation in faith based international volunteering projects in Latin America (Hopkins et al. 2010; Baillie Smith et al., 2013). The research took a case study approach, and worked with a non-denominational Christian charity that facilitates short-term projects with Latin American churches. Amongst other findings, Hopkins et al. (2010) established a trend amongst participants for seeing the short-term mission trip as a time of spiritual growth, and personal renewal, as much as of outward evangelism. Similarly, as part of a wider project considering the links between religion, development and tourism, DeTemple (2006) conducted interviews with American students undertaking short-term mission trips to Haiti during Spring Break. Her findings revealed that rather than seeing the work as benefiting the communities that they visited, their leader hoped that by traveling to Haiti and seeing poverty first hand the students would undergo a 'conversion' process, leading to the awakening of a global, historical consciousness / conscience and desire for further sustained action. Building on which, Baillie Smith et al.'s (2013) latest research output considers how faith based volunteering, faith and subjectivity interconnect, and discusses the attendant discourses of cosmopolitanism and global citizenship within this context. Importantly, this cluster of research has mainly focused on the missionaries themselves, rather than their targets, in an in-depth fashion. Adopting qualitative methodological tools such as ethnography, diary keeping and in-depth interviewing, researchers have been able to move beyond simple observations of 'the large number of volunteers [who] serve abroad with religious organisations' (Sherraden et al., 2008: 398) to add colour and personality to the actual

individuals involved. In doing so they have demonstrated the merits of undertaking in-depth qualitative research, and provided an important example that this thesis has followed in its examination of Evangelical missionaries' migration trajectories.

Missionary Geopolitics and Migration

In the previous section I provided a broad backdrop to this study, outlining the state of research into religion and migration in general, and signposting how this thesis builds on insights from pockets of research that are beginning to emerge around 'migrants as missionaries' and 'missionaries as migrants'. In the following sections I take the literatures that inform each chapter, in turn. Here I begin by discussing missionary geopolitics and migration, which provides the backdrop to Chapter Five's consideration of the rationales behind missionaries' choice of Albania as mission destination. Indeed, in recent years the importance of religion within geopolitics has begun to garner increasing attention from geographers (Agnew 2006; Dijkink 2006; Sturm 2006; Dittmer 2007a; Dittmer & Sturm, 2010; Megoran, 2006, 2010, 2013), and is now regarded as 'one of the most exciting frontiers for further geopolitical research' (Sidorov 2006: 340). This is illustrated by a surge in publications, including special editions in peer reviewed journals such as *Geopolitics*. To date however, mission(aries) have received only limited attention within this field. Meanwhile, the intersections between geopolitics and migration have also begun to be placed on the research agenda. In this section then I start by introducing the reader to the main themes that have dominated research into religion and geopolitics, missionary geopolitics, and the geopolitics of migration, before indicating how this thesis brings all three into productive tension in its examination of the relationship between missionaries' geopolitical imaginaries and consequent migration streams.

Until recently 'modern concerns with geopolitics have excluded the study of religion' (Sturm, 2013: 136), believing that its significance was dwindling. In the aftermath of September 11 however, instances of religious extremism have piqued interest once more. Indeed recent studies reveal a wider appreciation of the links between geopolitics and religious belief and practice in not only Islamic (see Habashi, 2013) and Christian traditions, but also Buddhism (McConnell, 2013) and Mormonism (Yorgason & Robertson, 2006; Yorgason & Hwang Chen, 2008). Indeed, once solely preoccupied with the stuff of formal politics, in recent years scholars have acknowledged that 'geopolitical reasoning does not apply only to statecraft; ordinary people typically use geopolitical prisms' (Yorgason & Hwang Chen, 2008: 479). Thus in addition to studies examining the evocation of religious discourse by geopoliticians (see Wallace, 2006), and in religious territorial conflict and holy wars (see Dijkink, 2006, 2009), further research has begun to examine examples of the intersections between religion and geopolitics at the scale of everyday believers. Similarly, in this thesis I examine the geopolitical imaginaries of missionaries as they both navigate, and make sense of, their path to Albania.

Besides a few isolated studies (see Megoran, 2006, 2010; Gallaher, 2010; Gerhardt, 2010 for an exception) the majority of work on the geopolitics of Christianity has to date clumped around Evangelical eschatology and its consequent geopolitical visions (see Sturm, 2006; Dittmer, 2008; Dittmer & Dodds, 2008; Dittmer & Spears, 2009; Dittmer & Sturm, 2010; Megoran, 2013). In other words, scholars have been interested in exploring 'the part of theology concerned with death, judgment, and the final destiny of the soul and of humankind'¹⁵ as depicted in the Book of Revelation. Revelation is the last book in the Bible, and takes the form of contemporary Jewish apocalyptic writing. Its style is highly evocative, and uses 'extraordinarily vivid imagery and language to depict cataclysmic events, moments that may present substantial ruptures in human history' (Megoran, 2013: 142). Several studies have, for example,

¹⁵ <http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/eschatology> [Accessed 7th May 2012]

focused on the *Left Behind* series, which fictionalises the end of the world. Comprising of 16 editions, the *Left Behind* novels have gained legions of fans in the United States, and subsequently attracted much academic interest as part of a wider trend in geopolitical scholarship for exploring the effect of popular culture on the geopolitical imaginations of everyday people through newspapers (McFarlane & Hay, 2003), cartoons (Dodds, 2010) and comic books (Berg, 2003; Dittmer, 2005, 2007b; Dittmer, 2009). In their exposition of the geopolitical significance of the text, Dittmer and Spears (2009) trace the narrative of the books, which tell the story of all those left behind after the rapture, an expected event in which true Christian believers will be taken to be with Jesus. Following which, those left behind are subjected to the tribulation, a seven year period of disaster and warfare, during which time the Anti-Christ seizes rule over the earth. A group called the Tribulation force band together however to try to convert non-believers and scupper the false messiah's plans. As Dittmer and Spears (2009: 183) show, the books produce 'specific geographies [that] are constructed... [and] tie certain places and people to either cosmic good or cosmic evil'. Iran, for example, is depicted as the headquarters of choice for the antichrist's 'global community' organisation.

Following calls for a greater appreciation of audiences' ability to not only consume but also interpret (Dodds, 2006; Dittmer & Larsen, 2007), Dittmer (2008) has also undertaken a qualitative content analysis of 50 'current events' discussion threads found on the *Left Behind Prophecy Club* internet bulletin board. In doing so he examines how audiences digest and re-interpret the geopolitical narrative found in the books. Highlighting discrepancies between the books' intended message, and discussions found on the board, Dittmer (2008: 299) argues for the importance of 'remember[ing] that religious life does not only exist in the church'. This chimes with Wallace (2006) who reminds us in his exposition of the 'Christian' geopolitics of the Bush administration, of the importance of remembering that within Protestantism believers are deemed capable of personal spiritual insight, and encouraged to interpret biblical narratives. Indeed, I build on this insight in Chapter Five as I uncover how the participants in this study understand Albania's role in the wider task of world

evangelisation. Meanwhile, Agnew (2006: 186) argues that *Left Behind* provides 'nothing less than a Bible-based geopolitics for a US policy on a range of issues', including with whom to side in the Israel-Palestine conflict, and a justification for ignoring global warming. And examining the geopolitical themes in the premillennialist writings of an other American Evangelical author named Mark Hitchcock, Sturm (2006: 248) finds that 'ideas like the ever closer Rapture teach followers to embrace the destruction of the world and act as channels for legitimating violence'. In contrast to these accounts however, Megoran (2013) presents an alternative interpretation of the Book of Revelation. He argues that it should be read 'not merely as a coded future prediction, informing reactionary politics, but as an anti-imperialist resistance text unmasking the fraud and violence of empire, informing a non-violent activist stance that struggles for justice and celebrates life' (Megoran, 2013: 145). Moreover, he issues the warning that by repeatedly stressing the potentially devastating consequences of apocalyptic visions (see Dalby, 1990; O'Tuathail, 2000), scholars run the risk of 'writing Christians as geography's 'repugnant cultural other' (Megoran, 2013: 141).

Meanwhile, despite the proliferation of historical studies which have depicted protestant missionaries as agents of colonialism (Comaroff and Comaroff 1991; Cooper 2005; Keane 2007; Roberts 2008a) and imperialism (Stanley 2001; Porter 2003; Ballantyne 2011; Etherington 2011), it is surprising that only a handful of scholars have chosen to place missionaries under the geopolitical lens. Indeed, it is only in the last five years that literature explicitly concerned with 'missionary geopolitics' (Dittmer & Sturm, 2010) has begun to emerge. To date the majority of work has coalesced around missionaries' relationship with state politics. At the scale of governance, for example, Gerhart (2010) uses the political theory of Carl Schmitt and Chantal Mouffe to identify a potentially problematic discord between the US State and contemporary Evangelical mission in Africa. More specifically, he argues that while the US has used Evangelical agents as a conduit for governance interventions, their resistance to religious pluralism characterises a growing chasm between the US states' preferred stance of liberal universalism, and Evangelicals' insistence on seeing Islam as a competitor for souls. At the same time, Gallaher (2010) drills down to consider the perspectives of mission

leaders on what she calls the 'Middle East Mission Paradox'. Citing a discrepancy between their dispensational, and premillennialist informed geopolitical visions of war in the Middle East, and their everyday desire to 'save souls' regardless, she makes the important observation that 'there is often a gap between Evangelicalism's public, often singular rhetoric (and academic representations thereof) and its more private, internal variation' (Gallaher 2010: 222). This finding is salient to this thesis, which also draws attention to incongruities between public and private outworkings of Evangelicalism, particularly in relation to missionaries' relationships with their supporters, and the construction, maintenance and experience of the missionary home in Chapters Six and Seven respectively.

In a different vein, while geopolitical geographers have been criticised for making too little an effort to develop 'a geopolitics of peace' (O'Loughlin and Heske 1991: 52), Megoran (2010) uses the lens of a mission organisation to think geographically about what he terms, 'pacific geopolitics' (Megoran 2010: 382). More specifically, he examines a 'Reconciliation Walk', designed and promoted by Youth With A Mission (YWAM), a large global Evangelical mission agency. The walk involved thousands of largely American and European Christians following the pathways of the First Crusade and apologising to Jews, Eastern Christians and Muslims for the Crusades. Through his research Megoran (2010) found that partaking in this spiritual journey had a profound impact on the geopolitical visions of the Evangelical participants, as their encounters with 'local' people led them to re-evaluate their deep-seated views on the Arab-Israeli disputes, and to recognise the 'Crusades as emblematic of, a 'Crusader spirit' of arrogant superiority that infects subsequent Christianity (and Westernism) down to and including contemporary Evangelicalism' (392). As such, Megoran (2010) underlines the wider importance of examining how intimate geographies can influence inner world geopolitical visions, and in turn shape both secular and spiritual praxis.

Just as there have been only a limited number of studies into missionary geopolitics, the relationship between geopolitics and migration has also only tentatively been examined. In 2002, for example Nagel (1971) argued that 'immigration and geopolitics are usually treated as separate topics of study, and only a few scholars have used the term 'geopolitics of migration'. Again, ten years later, Hyndman (2012: 243) went on to insist that 'geopolitics and their relation to migration and mobility remain an underdeveloped area of scholarship'. Indeed, a review of the research available reveals that to date there has been a significant lack of work that explicitly forges this link. Moreover, the little research that has been done has had a limited focus, following Massey's (1993) work on the 'politics of mobility and access', and the increasing securitisation of migration. For example, in his paper on mobility, racism and geopolitics, Tesfahuney (1998: 499) successfully underlines how discourses and regimes of migration control in Europe perpetuate the 'racialisation, securitisation and criminalisation of certain types of international migrants', leading to different mobility rights. Picking up on a similar theme Nagel (2002) has written a groundbreaking article around the geopolitical discourses and practices espoused by the US government, and the public's consequent understanding of immigrant groups' (particularly Muslims from the Middle East) ability to assimilate.

Given the dearth of both research into the geopolitics of migration, and missionary geopolitics, it is unsurprising that the intersections between these two bodies of literature have yet to be developed. One notable exception, however, signposts the potential for such a cross-fertilisation. Han (2010a) has written on the formulation of global missionary strategy, focusing on the geopolitical construct of the 10/40 window. This is a cartographic tool created by Evangelicals to demarcate key areas for proselytisation, encompassing 'most of the world's areas of greatest physical and spiritual need, most of the world's unreached peoples and most of governments that oppose Christianity' (Johnstone et al., 2001: 755, cited in Han, 2010a). Tracing its development she goes on to argue that this, and the attendant practice of identifying

and approaching 'unreached people groups', 'rationalises the target of the mission mandate. It demonstrates that what is measurable is ultimately controllable' (Han, 2010a: 192).' While Han (2010a) does not explicitly frame her analysis within the language of migration, this article nonetheless provides a clear example of how religious ideas can shape geopolitical imaginations, and consequently migratory destinations. Building on which, this thesis looks to further address the lacuna in research linking geopolitics, mission and migration. Indeed, through its consideration of the rationales that shape missionaries' migration to Albania, Chapter Five further demonstrates how literature from across religion and geopolitics, missionary geopolitics, and the geopolitics of migration can be brought into productive tension.

Connecting Here and There: Transnationalism and Proximity/Distance

At the start of this chapter I introduced literature which examines the relationship between religion and migration, and noted the influence of the 'transnational turn' on this corpus. In particular, I emphasised three trends, each of which this thesis steps outside. First, I argued that there has been a bias towards research into immigrant lives; second, studies continue to use the framework of incorporation/resistance; and third, scholars' hesitation to tease out the full implications of religious self-identification is a reminder that religion has yet 'to be acknowledged fully, and in like manner alongside race, class and gender in geographical analysis' (Kong, 2001a: 212). Building on these insights, the following section moves away from the geopolitical to pick up the 'optic' (Boccagni, 2012: 296) of transnationalism once more, and foregrounds its use in Chapter Six, which examines the transnational social relations that enable missionaries to migrate to, and live in, Albania. More specifically, given that its 'deployments have been varied both in conceptual premises and empirical applications' (Crang et al, 2003: 441), I begin by reviewing three of the key ways in which transnationalism has been conceptualised within the religion and migration literature. I discuss in turn work that has clustered around *remittance*, *network*, and *social field*, and examine how each 'concept stresses different nuances' (Nieswand, 2011). In doing so I justify the use of the latter two in Chapter Six. Next I turn to introduce the geographical concept of

proximity/distance, which became an important tool for understanding the distinctive nature of missionaries' transnational social relations. In doing so I make the argument that engagement with the relationship between spatial distance and social process have been sidelined in recent years, and instead it has simply been assumed that distance is always something to be overcome in favour of proximity. As I will contend in Chapter Six, however, distance is not necessarily undesirable, and can in fact play a productive role in maintaining 'proximal' transnational relationships.

Remittance

As previously stated, transnationalism is typically used to refer to 'the multiple ties and interactions linking people or institutions across the borders of nation-states' (Vertovec, 1999: 447). The concept of remittances has been a popular way to think through this relationship, as demonstrated by the vast literature looking at the practice amongst labour migrants, hometown association members (Mercer et al., 2008) and the transnational business elite (Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007). Borrowing from this language, scholars have also posited the notion of 'social remittances' (Levitt, 1998a; Levitt & Lamba-Nieves, 2011). Levitt (1998a: 927), for instance, describes social remittances as 'the ideas, behaviours, identities, and social capital that flow from receiving- to sending-country communities.' Defining the term further, Levitt (1998a) differentiates between three forms of remittance, *normative structures*, which include ideas, values, and beliefs; *systems of practice* that are actions shaped by normative structures; and *social capital* both in terms of the capital itself, and the values and norms upon which it is based. Despite Levitt's (1998a) high profile within literature around religion and migration however, only a narrow focus on 'religious practice' is mentioned as a form of remittance, subsumed within the broader category of *systems of practice*.

Addressing this omission as part of her research with Brazilians living in London, Sheringham (2010a: 19) has added further nuance to the concept by coining the term 'religious remittance' to refer to 'the ways in which religious practices and beliefs are

transferred across borders between sending and receiving and return settings'. Unlike Levitt's (1998a) definition, the emphasis is on both belief and practice, and moves beyond conceptualising remittances as a one-way affair. Sheringham (2010a) draws on Goldring's (2003) study of remittances to argue that 'remittances are multi-directional and multi-polar as opposed to flowing primarily in the direction of sending countries'. Consequently, unlike Levitt's (1998a) earlier definition, which envisaged remittances as simply moving from receiving to sending countries, Sheringham (2010a) uses remittances to stress the important point that non-migrants are also implicated in the creation and maintenance of transnational space, a contention which I return to later (see Crang et al., 2003; Jackson et al., 2004). Clearly therefore remittances are a useful tool for thinking through transnational connections. Yet at the same time I suggest that the term implies a kind of shapelessness. As opposed to networks, the concept of remittance does not in and of itself give the reader a sense of spatial structure. In light of which, I will now turn to discuss the use of 'networks' within literature examining transnational religion.

Network

As Sheringham (2010a: 55) underlines, 'the concept of transnational networks has been important within theorisations of how religion functions across borders'. Indeed, a brief survey of the literature reveals that networks have been evoked within discussions as diverse as young people's narratives of nation and religion (Hopkins, 2007); Muslim conceptions of the Umma (Allievi & Nielsen, 2003); Buddhist monasticism, and clergy and devotee networks (Kitiarsa, 2010a; 2010b); the dynamics of homophobia across the global Anglican Communion (Valentine et al., 2012; Valentine et al., 2013); and the impact of transnational networks on contemporary Ukrainian churches (Long, 2007). Indeed, the use of networks has a long history within the social sciences (Vasquez, 2008), and has been enthusiastically taken up by scholars interested in examining how religion straddles borders.

Within the context of migration, *Religion Across Borders: Transnational Immigrant Networks* (Ebaugh & Chafetz, 2002) has become a seminal text. Ebaugh and Chafetz (2002) use network analysis to examine religious communities stretched across space. They advocate for studies that illuminate the structure of transnational religious networks, and place a particular emphasis on elucidating the actual number of ties between 'nodes', the direction of material and social flows, and the strength of these network ties. Using this framework their research differentiated between, and examined the relationships that bound, individuals (micro-level), local-level corporate bodies (meso-level), and international religious bodies (macro-level). While evoking the concept of remittance, they use it 'in a systematic and grounded fashion' as part of a wider examination of the 'various networks in which they circulate' (8). Having described the transnational ties that link members of Houston congregations and individuals, groups, and congregations in their sending communities, Ebaugh and Chafetz (2002) go on to take a comparative approach. More specifically, they consider the types of actors and ties, kinds of remittance that flow between nodes, the variable that could influence the variety of transnational religious networks, and how they changed over time. They find that socioeconomic status, legality, distance from the homeland, how immigrant communities are geographically scattered, and fluency in the English language all effect the shape of transnational religious networks. Clearly, Ebaugh and Chafetz's particular focus on structure is highly commendable, yet as Vertovec (2003: 647) argues, 'the structure of the network itself says very little about the qualitative nature of relationships comprising it'. With this in mind, I will now turn to look at some studies which place a stronger emphasis on tracing the movement of ideas across networks, and the social relations that facilitate this.

Within a study of the Global Anglican Communion Valentine et al (2012) and Valentine et al (2013) have engaged in examining both material networks, and their intertwining with the movement of ideas. More specifically, Valentine et al. (2012) examine 'the circulation of homophobic discourses...and how these discourses are made sense of in different sites to produce specific moral geographies'. Drawing on case studies of parishes in three different national contexts (UK, USA and South Africa), they

demonstrate how the direction of resources, including money, are at times used strategically to influence the direction of debate. Consequently, as they trace the circulation of homophobic discourses through the transnational faith networks of the Communion, they uncover an influential and 'complex geometry of power' (Valentine et al., 2012: 50). Further, in her research into contemporary Ukrainian Baptist churches, Long (2007) has drawn attention to the growing transnational connections with churches, people and ideas in other parts of the world. Yet rather than tracing 'the genesis or development of these transnational networks', she chooses rather to 'focus on how the Ukrainian participants view those transnational relationships' (Long, 2007: 336). Through a close examination of church members' perspectives therefore, she is able to produce an in-depth exposition of how they blame the growing transnational connections between their church and other churches, people and religious ideas in the West, for several unwelcome changes within their Ukrainian congregation. Taken together, these studies therefore inform this thesis by demonstrating the fruitful way in which an engagement with both the structure of religious networks, and the nature of the qualitative relationships of which they comprise, can illuminate the operation of religion across borders.

Social Field

Building on the concept of networks, the term social field was developed to indicate how individual networks form part of a larger, sprawling map of interconnections. Indeed, studies that take individual migrants, the networks that they form, and the social fields that are created by these networks, have become the focus of increasing research in recent years (Dunn, 2010:7). Recognising that at times the concept has been poorly defined, Glick-Schiller and Fouron (1999: 344) have referred to transnational social fields as 'an unbounded terrain of interlocking egocentric networks' that transcend national borders. Understood as a more encompassing term than network, this conception of transnational space has been acknowledged as 'a powerful tool for conceptualizing the potential array of social relations linking those who move and those who stay behind' (Levitt & Glick-Schiller, 2004: 1009). In other words, it moves beyond a

sole focus on the direct experience of migration, toward understanding how those who do not move become implicated in transnationality. Consequently, as Jackson et al (2004: 13) have argued, 'adopting the idea of transnationality as a social field can...have transformative effects on what and how we study'.

Within the field of religion and migration, Glick-Schiller's (2005) paper, *Transnational social fields and imperialism: Bringing a theory of power to Transnational Studies* is exemplary of this. In it, she uses the concept of a 'transnational social field', to show how, by listening to migrants' insistence that they are first and foremost Christian, a relationship between political organisations and migrants' implication in US based fundamentalist transnational religious networks became visible (despite their own often traumatic encounters with imperial forces). To explain, one of the migrant congregations which she studied was involved with the US Prayer Center, whose website depicts God's right hand under George Bush. America is clearly identified in this narrative as a force of Good, battling Evil, and Glick Schiller (2005) argues that as a result 'people within fundamentalist Christian networks such as the one organized by Heaven's Gift [the pastor] were encouraged to identify with the United States, even as they espoused a Christian identity' (2005: 446). Consequently, the spiritual vision of these migrants, wherein the United States' foreign policy should be unquestioningly supported, took precedence over any ethnic or nationalist marker that might be in conflict with this stance. Indeed, as Glick-Schiller (2005) strongly emphasises, by adopting a 'transnational social field' she avoided using 'an ethno-cultural unit of analysis' that might have missed this important transnational dynamic (see Glick-Schiller, 2005; 2006; 2008a; 2008b; 2008c; 2009; Glick Schiller et al., 2006 for a critique of methodological nationalism).

The concept of 'transnational social field' is therefore embraced both by academics looking at the relationship between religion and migration (see Glick-Schiller & Fouron, 2002; Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004; Glick-Schiller, 2005), and this thesis in particular, for two key reasons. First, because of the way in which it encourages both an examination

of networks, but also what they collectively add up to. And second, because it enables researchers to explore how 'migrants are often embedded in multi-layered, multi-sited transnational social fields, encompassing those who move *and* those who stay behind' (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004: 1003), whether this be in their 'home' country, or elsewhere in the world. In light of which, I adopt a focus on networks and the transnational social field which they make up in Chapter Six, as part of an examination of the transnational social relations that both facilitate missionaries' migration, and become manifest in their everyday lives.

(Re)examining Transnationalism and Proximity/Distance

In exploring the transnational social relationships implicated in missionary life I was struck by the salience of proximity/distance to what I found. Indeed, in an article examining geography's vocabulary, Jackson (2006) singled out ideas around proximity and distance as one of four core concepts within the discipline. Yet despite this recognition, a concern with spatial distance has at times been underplayed by transnational accounts more concerned with emphasising connectivity over space (Leifsen & Tymczuk, 2012). Indeed, within the transnational optic, developments in transportation and information and communication technologies (ICTs) have been pinpointed as providing the 'means by which to shrink the distance between 'here' and 'there' (Collins, 2009: 856). Correspondingly it has been possible to detect 'triumphalist voices' (Aguilar, 2004: 93) suggesting the 'death of distance' (Morgan, 2004). In the last few years however, 'there has apparently been a revival of a more antiquated concern with the relationship between spatial distance and social process' (Featherstone et al., 2007: 385). Arising out of which, there has been a backlash against 'the tired refrain that 'distance no longer matters' (Samers, 2010: 39; see also Knox & Marston, 2005:25). Instead scholars have increasingly called for transnationalism to be 'grounded' in the nitty gritty of everyday lives (Mitchell, 1997; Ley, 2004; Conradson & Latham, 2005; Walsh, 2006a; Dunn, 2010; Allon & Andersen, 2010). The result has been a cluster of work which underscores 'the continued relevance of the geographical building blocks of separation and difference in a putative world of growing proximity' (Ley, 2004: 162).

While a necessary corrective to accounts that have solely stressed the 'flighty' over the 'sticky' (see Jackson et al., 2004: 8), I argue however that when the significance of spatial distance is recognised, it is presented in a negative light, and as something preferably overcome. Further, I suggest that proximity is typically 'felt to be obligatory, appropriate or desirable' (Urry, 2002: 258) within such accounts. Yet, as I contend in Chapter Six, spatial distance is not necessarily undesirable, and can in fact play an important role in maintaining 'proximal' transnational relationships.

In recent years scholars have increasingly examined 'the distance destroying capacity' facilitated by technological advancements (Morgan, 2004: 3). This is none the more so evident than in early studies of transnationalism, which focused on a 'transnational capitalist class' (see for example, Ong & Nonini, 1996; Sklair, 2001) made up of the hypermobile business elite (Featherstone et al., 2007). Indeed, within literature on transnational migration, ICTs in particular have been identified as having the ability to 'increase connectivity, shrink barriers and bridge the gap in long-distance transfer of money, consumer goods and other values for achieving (virtual) relational closeness and meaning where the absence of co-presence and co-habitation conditions social interaction' (Leifsen & Tymczuk, 2012: 232). Further, the explosion of cheap communication has been identified not only as a 'social glue' (Vertovec, 2004a: 219), but also as explaining the difference between historic and contemporary experiences of migration (Levitt, 2001; Portes, 2001; Waldinger & Fitzgerald, 2004). As Portes (2001: 188) explains,

'The advent of cheap and efficient air transport, telephone and facsimile technology and above all the Internet, endows contemporary immigrants with resources entirely beyond the reach of their predecessors. While, with the wisdom of hindsight, it is possible to identify and study the 'transnational' ventures of earlier Italian, Polish, and Russian immigrants, such activities could never have acquired the density, realtime character, and flexibility made possible by today's technologies'.

Demonstrating the advantages of this new environment a large amount of research has examined how new technologies 'heighten the immediacy and frequency of migrants' contact with their sending communities and allow them to be actively involved in everyday life there in fundamentally different ways than in the past' (Levitt, 2001: 22). In particular studies have largely clustered around the implications of ICTs for transnational families trying to sustain relationships at a distance (Mahler, 2001; Parrenas, 2005; Wilding, 2006; Madianou & Miller, 2011a, 2011b; Madianou, 2012). Looking at the life of one family, for example, Mahler (2001) shows how technological innovations have allowed a husband in New York to communicate with his wife and son in El Salvador to the extent that while 'they are physically distanced...they can now feel and function like a family'. At the same time, research has also clustered around what has become known as 'transnational mothering' (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997; Parrenas, 2005, 2013; Uy-Tioco, 2007; Fresneza-Flot, 2009; Madianou, 2012) or 'mothering from a distance' (Parrenas, 2001). In light of the 'feminisation of migration' (Labadie-Jackson, 2008) mothering at a distance has become more prolific as women have sought employment in the global North as part of what Hochschild (2000) has termed 'care chains'. Within this context, research into the experiences of Filipina women separated from their children has 'acquired paradigmatic status' (Madianou, 2012), and is particularly useful for thinking about how families nurture 'virtual intimacies' (Wilding, 2006). In another article, for example, Madianou (2012) adopts an ethnographic approach to examine how the use of ICTs affected Filipina mothers' perception of their ability to mother their left behind children. Arising from which Madianou (2012: 292) has noted how 'ICTs allow for the practicing of intensive mothering at a distance, empowering women to be in control of their households and children's upbringing'.

Within the aforementioned studies spatial distance is presented as something to be overcome, given 'the considerable impact of spatial separation on social relations (particularly within a family context), affecting the ability of transmigrants to conduct, successfully, certain activities and maintain intimate relationships at a distance' (Featherstone et al., 2007: 385). Within this stream of research, ICTs, and the sense of proximity they enable, are therefore pinpointed as having 'revolutionised' the

way in which transnational families maintain long-distance relationships (Madianou & Miller, 2011a). At the same time however studies have argued that the 'virtual proximity' (Urry, 2002: 265) engendered is not necessarily enough to negate the impact of separation over space. Whereas research on 'astronaut families', for instance, has at times conceived these transnational characters as part of a hypermobile capitalist class operating in a borderless world, scholars have also used their experiences to stress 'the enduring relationship between spatial distance and social relations within a profoundly transnational setting' (Waters, 2002: 117). Meanwhile, emphasising the embodied experience of migration, O'Connor (2010) argues that degrees of homesickness can, in part, be measured in relation to actual distance from 'home'. Further, comparing how Ukrainian and Ecuadorian labour migrants in Madrid undertake 'care from a distance' Leifsen and Tymczuk (2012: 219) argue that 'care practices are structured by geographical distance, and that the distinction between overseas and overland is significant.' Consequently, a renewed interest in the relationship between spatial distance and social process has begun to undercut overly celebratory accounts of the 'death of distance' (Morgan, 2004).

More importantly for this thesis however, the assumption embedded in much transnational literature, that physical or virtual proximity is necessarily desirable, is also being brought into question (Velayutham & Wise, 2005; Horst, 2006; Collins, 2009). Interested in how ICTs shape everyday transnational communications, Horst (2006) traces how the shift from community phone boxes to individually owned mobile (cell) phones has affected a community in rural Jamaica. Interestingly she found that while for many, 'the mobile phone is viewed as an unadulterated blessing' for others it 'remains an object of ambivalence, bringing unforeseen burdens and obligations' (Horst, 2006: 143). For Lisa, a 32 year old living in Jamaica, a mobile phone brought with it the ability to communicate with Robert, her boyfriend living in Germany. Yet over time it became a tool for surveillance, as Robert would call her several times a day, questioning her about who she was with, and what the background noises that he could hear were. Turning to examine the internet, Collins (2009) has undertaken a study of the use of personal homepages amongst South Korean international students in Auckland, New Zealand.

As part of his wider research he makes two important points, both of which are highly relevant to this thesis. First, the internet can facilitate 'processes of surveillance and disciplining' (Collins, 2009: 839). Second, the online world is not disconnected from offline realities, rather they bleed in to each other. Both these tenets were evident in the case of one female South Korean student, who had posted photos on her homepage of herself in a bar with some non-Korean men. She began receiving abusive messages from an old class mate who took exception to the scene, and attempted to exert a form of 'patriarchal nationalism' that sought to 'discipline the Korean female body' (Collins, 2009: 855). In displaying images of her life 'here' to people 'there', Collins (2009) makes the important observation that Ha-Na experienced one of the negative consequences of virtual proximity. And so, in response, she chose to start censoring the photos that she shared online, as well as her discussions. But what Collins (2009) does not highlight is how in doing so, Ha-Na uses the spatial distance between herself and her classmate creatively, to craft a publicly acceptable representation of her life in New Zealand. In contrast to normative accounts of transnationalism therefore, Ha-Na actually harnesses distance and uses it productively. This strategy, as I will explore in Chapter Six, is not only limited to Ha-Na, but also employed to significant effect by some of the missionaries in this study.

Indeed, as Vertovec (2004b: 289) has contended, ICTs are 'now having a considerable impact on transnational religious organisation and activity'. For example, Kong has examined how 'technology has opened up new spaces of religious practice - or 'techno-religious spaces' (Kong, 2013, see also 2001b) through a study of religious radio broadcasts. At the same time however, and as Sheringham (2013: 59) notes, there is a corresponding 'lack of research into how [ICTs] impact the religious lives of migrants and thus how such new media enable them to practice religion in different ways as they live their lives across borders'. Through a focus on missionaries' transnational social relations, and in turn an examination of missionaries' use of electronic prayer letters and Facebook, as well their reception, this thesis therefore looks to contribute to two interconnected areas of research; first the dynamics of

proximity/distance in migration, and second the use of ICTs by transnational religious communities.

Home

Turning from the geopolitical and transnational, this section continues by considering literature around 'home'. By being attentive to the research questions, 'home' emerged as a key space for examining the disjunctures between the perceived ideals and lived realities of mission in Albania, and how these are experienced and negotiated. Indeed, as both 'a place, a site in which we live...[and] an idea and an imaginary that is imbued with feelings' (Blunt & Dowling, 2006: 2), academic research into 'home' has grown exponentially in the past 10 years. A plethora of monographs have been published across the humanities and social sciences (see Blunt & Dowling, 2006), and in 2004 a new interdisciplinary journal called *Home Cultures* was established. Meanwhile the geographies of home have been the focus of several special issues and editorials, including *Antipode* (2003) and *Cultural Geographies* (2004) (see also Jacobs, 2003). Following this snowballing in interest, academics have examined 'home' through myriad identity frames including gender (Madigan et al., 1990; McDowell, 1999; Gowans, 2001; Adler, 2009; Atherton, 2009; Colville, 2009; Findlay, 2009), class (Dowling, 2009), race (Hooks, 1990; Collins, 1991), disability (Gleeson & Kearns, 2001; Imrie, 2004; Chouinard, 2006), age (Percival, 2002; Rosh, 2002) and sexuality (Gorman-Murray, 2006, 2012; Hamilton, 2009). To date however 'home' has only rarely been viewed through religious eyes. It is unsurprising therefore that work around 'the changing relationship between migrants and their 'homes', [which] is held to be an almost quintessential characteristic of transnational migration' (Al-Ali & Koser, 2004: 1) has also been slow to take up this lens. Despite the dearth in research however, this thesis draws together insights from the general home literature, and more specific studies of home and migration, to elucidate overseas missionaries' experiences of home. I provide a backdrop to this by beginning the following section with a review of the little literature that has been written on religion and home. After which, I draw out

two themes that are salient to this thesis: *Home as Spectacle* and *Home and Materiality*.

Religion and Home

In 1994 McDannell lamented that 'historians of the nineteenth century explore the nature of sex roles, labour, childhood, demographics and ethnicity but ignore the relationship between religion and the home' (xiii). Years later, and despite a surge in research around 'home' across the social sciences more generally, this situation unfortunately remains little changed. Meanwhile, to date, existing research that has considered the relationship between religion and home has typically centered on traditional themes concerning family life (Wilcox, 2004; Edgell, 2006), the domestic division of household labour (see Ellison & Bartkowski, 1996, 2002; Sherkat, 2000; Gallagher, 2003), and childrearing (Dudley, 1978; Ellison et al., 1996). Recently however there have been some noticeable exceptions to this trend, including a growing literature on the Muslim geographies of home (Dwyer, 1999; 2000; 2002; Hopkins, 2007; Hopkins & Smith, 2008; Wallace, 2012) and home as sacred space (Kong, 2002; Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2003; Williams, 2010), which I discuss in this section.

As Kong (2009: 171) has observed, 'a noticeable proportion of work in the post 1990s is focused on Muslim geographies, that is the geographical analysis of Muslim populations - their places, identities, communities and societies - at various, local, national and transnational scales'. Reflecting this, a body of literature has emerged around the Muslim geographies of identity, belonging and home (Dwyer, 1999; 2000; 2002; Hopkins, 2007; Smith & Hopkins, 2008; Wallace, 2012). Dwyer (1999; 2000; 2002), for example, has undertaken research with British Muslim schoolgirls whose parents were born in Pakistan. In it she draws on work by Hall (1992), who stresses that identity involves a dynamic process of positioning, in order to examine the multiplicity of identity and its relation to home. Drawing on detailed narratives from interviews and group discussions, Dwyer (2002) argues against popular conceptualisations of postcolonial identities as constructed by sets of conflicting cultural binaries. Instead,

she contends that 'the making of identity is also a process of making home' (2002: 196) and that through 'the process of making Britain home, other places are made home, as identities are made, remade and negotiated' (2002: 197). Consequently, she argues for a recognition of hybrid identities wherein individuals 'negotiate belongings to several different 'homes' at one or the same time' (198). Similarly, in a study with Muslim young men in Scotland, Hopkins (2007: 61) explores 'the complex way young men feel that they belong, or do not belong, within a Scottish national identity'. Considering the fluid way in which his participants utilised identity markers, he finds that 'although the majority of the young men identify as Scottish Muslims, the meanings and associations of these identity markers vary in strength, nature and meaning' (2007: 61).

In recent years studies have also taken their cue from lively debates on the geography of religion around the relationship between the sacred/secular, and have explored the home as 'sacred space'. In a study that adopted a visual methodology, Williams (2010), for example, used participant elicited photographs to draw out the intersections between religion, spirituality and everyday spaces. He found that the home was a key site in which participants felt able to connect to God. Bedrooms were cited as particularly productive spaces for prayer, for example, given the sense of intimacy they evoke. Meanwhile, Mazumdar and Mazumdar (2009) have focused on the Hindu home and the importance of rituals of sacralisation. They examine how Hindus purify the outside of their homes through the introduction of significant plants into the existing land, and also sacralise the inside by leading a cow through each room. Similarly, Kong (2002) has also been concerned with examining how residential space becomes sacred space, as for example in her study of home churches in Singapore. Through both an exploration of restrictive planning regulations, and a religious communities' decision to occupy everyday spaces such as the home for worship, Kong (2002: 1585) argues that the 'distinct break between that which is secular and that which is sacred...must now be rethought and focus given to what is betwixt and between'. These studies have therefore shown how a focus on the mundane everyday space of the home can complicate assumptions around where the sacred is located and experienced.

In this thesis however I move away from these concerns and instead consider two alternate themes that hold more salience for this research. These include *home as spectacle* and *home and materiality*. Within these sections I highlight the meagre amount of work that has been done with religious perspectives in mind. At the same time, I also draw on scholarship around these themes from within the wider home, and home and migration literature, to illuminate the findings discussed in Chapter Seven. In drawing together insights around the public/private nature of home, as well as the significance of materiality therefore, this thesis both contributes to, and develops, existing literature around the relationship between religion and home.

Home as Spectacle

In recent years normative ideas around the home as a private and bounded space have increasingly come into question (see Oberhauser, 1997; Blunt & Varley, 2004; Blunt & Dowling, 2006). Instead, it is now widely accepted that 'home is best understood as a site of intersecting spheres, constituted through both public and private' (Blunt & Dowling 2006:18). This finding has been fleshed out by a number of rich empirical studies, the largest pocket of which have focused on how sexuality shapes experiences of home, and vice versa (Gorman-Murray, 2007, 2012; Waitt & Gorman-Murray, 2011). Arising out of which is the contention that 'notionally private practices of homemaking are bound to wider politics of social relationships' (Gorman-Murray, 2007: 1383). In her study of lesbian identities in and out of the parental home, for example, Johnston and Valentine (1995) found that participants felt they were subject to intra-domestic surveillance, and had to stage manage their domestic environments. In the case of one participant this meant monitoring her parents' movements when they visited her new home, and ensuring that they did not enter rooms in which there were lesbian posters. Meanwhile, in a recent paper Gorman-Murray (2012) focuses on extra-domestic surveillance to look at gay men's management of the public/private boundary in Australia. He draws attention on the one hand to attempts to seal the home from outside gaze, and keeping books, magazines, movies and pictures that might identify one's sexuality out of view. On the other hand he also indicates cases in which

participants actively sought to perform their sexual identity through materially symbolic statements such as displaying a gay rainbow flag in their garden. These studies underline how the home can be a site of (non)performance, carefully negotiated and managed in order to transmit messages about the owner's sexual identity.

In a similar vein, several studies have examined how in history the home was utilised as a vehicle for socio-political change across multiple scales (Blunt, 1999; Marston, 2000, 2004; Wood, 2005). Exemplary of which is Blunt's (1999) piece on British domesticity in India between 1886 and 1925. By exploring information in household guides written for British women, she is able to demonstrate how through the directed management of servants, imperial power structures manifested themselves at a household scale. Meanwhile, Wood (2005) has written on the lives of domestic wives in the U.S Foreign Service, 1905 - 1941. Overturning the assumption that wives played only a small role in American diplomacy, she goes on to argue that 'by organising and managing highly visible social functions, many of which took place in their own homes, Foreign Service wives helped facilitate the exchange of information and messages, official and unofficial, overt and subtle, that defined the conduct of early 20th century diplomacy... [and were] representative of the American way of life' (Wood, 2005: 145). Meanwhile, in an exploration of the domestic lives of middle class women in the United States between 1870 and 1920, Marston (2000: 237) argues that the home was increasingly imagined as a scale of social production. Considering nineteenth century domestic management texts, she finds that 'pragmatic prose' on household chores envisaged women as productive citizens, and were 'subscribed with a political grammar that constructed women as active players within the context of a developing democracy'. Home-making was therefore recognised as 'multi-scalar' (Blunt & Dowling, 2006: 22), and performing a public function, its influence stretching out beyond the domestic to the city and the nation.

Despite home being 'a cornerstone of missionary thinking, it [has] been ignored in virtually all studies of mission theology' (Roberts, 2008b: 165), a scattering of historical

studies have also uncovered a similar dynamic at play in the missionary home. For example, in her archival research into the lives of missionaries living and working in Papua New Guinea, Langmore (1989) found that the missionary home was expected to offer 'the object lesson of a civilised, Christian home'. In other words, the practices of housekeeping and child rearing that took place within the space of the home were conceptualised as public performances of moral Christian living (see also Grimshaw, 1989). Chiming with the aforementioned work on materiality, some scholars have also uncovered how the material culture of missionary homes were also constructed with a view to disseminating a particular image. In a wider study on the lives of American Women missionaries living in China at the turn of the century, for instance, Hunter (1984: 129) briefly draws attention to the material culture of missionaries' homes. Pondering why women 'were so faithful to the artefacts of home that they transported them around the world', she concludes that they played an important role in demonstrating civility. In other words, civilisation was associated with the externals of western culture, and in turn Christian living. Similarly, in an examination of 'the importance of the house to nineteenth century Norwegian missionaries in Madagascar' Skeie (1999: 71; see also, 2012) deftly exposes the centrality of the 'mission station' to the undertaking of the mission work itself. For beyond providing shelter, they also acted as a physical symbol to other missionary groups that that particular area had been claimed for evangelisation. While of a historical nature, these studies are of particular importance to Chapter Seven, since they expose the missionary home as an object of spectacle, and a vehicle for communication.

While there have been a scattering of historical studies into the missionary home therefore, to date scholars have overlooked their contemporary significance. One exception to this can be found in research undertaken by Berman (2009) into the construction of identity and the maintenance of social ties among Chabad-Lubavitch emissaries. While not strictly focused on the home itself, his paper does reveal it to be a key site for proselytisation. More specifically, the dinner table is cited as the stage for sharing the Sabbath meal, which Chabad-Lubavitch emissaries use as a form of outreach to other non Chabad-Lubavitch Jews. Clearly therefore, 'within geographic

research on religion more broadly, there is a pressing need to examine domestic spaces of religious identity and performance' (Wallace, 2012: 58), to which this thesis responds.

Home and Materiality

As Ho and Hatfield (2010) assert material culture has been a longstanding focus for research within cultural geography and anthropology, and has enjoyed a revival in recent years following an explosion of interest from the wider social sciences (see also Jackson, 2000; Anderson & Tolia-Kelly, 2004; Tolia-Kelly, 2004a, 2004b). To date seminal texts include those by Miller (2001; 2008; 2010) and Dant (1999). Influenced by this 'material turn' scholars have increasingly used materiality as a way to think through people's relationship to home. In this section then I review work on religion and home, and migration, identity and belonging, which have taken a material lens.

As Wallace (2012: 56) argues, to date 'contemporary work upon religion and the home has been slow to focus on the role that the material geographies of home and home-making practices (including architecture and design) have in the production and expression of religious beliefs and practices'. There are however a few notable exceptions (McDannell, 1998; Konieczny, 2009), the earliest example of which can be found in McDannell's (1998) seminal text, *Material Christianity: Religion and Popular Culture*, which speaks into the aforementioned idea of home as 'sacred space'. Looking at the domestic materiality of nineteenth and twentieth century American homes, McDannell (1998) argues that people weave religion in to their everyday landscapes, purchasing and displaying religious artefacts and images, and choosing to wear symbols of their faith on their body. This materiality she suggests, is about Christians wanting 'to see, hear and touch God' (McDannell, 1998:1). In other words, making God manifest in a tangible way. Meanwhile, in a comparative study of two theologically divergent Catholic parishes Konieczny (2009) has explored the ties between the material culture of public worship and examples of religious expression in congregants' homes. She found that while the theologically liberal worship space of St Brigitta had

very little religious iconography, congregants' homes were full of adorning objects. In contrast, a more conservative church featured a multitude of religious art and decorative objects, yet worshippers' homes were spartan, with few embellishments. This, Konieczny (2009) argues, is indicative of 'distinct congregational logics surrounding the making of the self'. Indeed, St Briggita's congregants valued individualised self-expression more than the theologically conservative church, who instead chose to play down their individuality in favour of family and church identities. In other words, Konieczny (2009) finds that choices of home decoration expressed individual theological leanings. This study is particularly important for the following thesis since it indicates how the material home is shaped by wider concerns of theology, a point which I build upon in Chapter Seven.

Given the limited research that has been undertaken around religion, home and material culture however, it is unsurprising that there has also been a lacuna in research into how migrants' 'religious beliefs, values, activities and ceremonies [also] affect home selection, decor, aesthetics and use' (Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2009: 264). Looking to address this gap Mazumdar and Mazumdar (2003; 2009; 2012) have broadened the application of the material lens to spearhead work at the interface between religion and home in the context of migration. Their research largely centres around the lives of Hindu immigrants in America, and examines how 'religion influences and is inscribed into home spaces through decor, artefacts, and gardens' (Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2009: 256). In particular they highlight the importance of the altar (2003: 144) as a focal point of the migrant home, allowing for not only a re-creation of 'objectifications' of the sacred but also the remembrance of past homes. This ties in with seminal work from Tolia-Kelly (2004a), one of the leading figures (re)materialising home. In her research with women of the South Asian diaspora living in North West London, Tolia-Kelly (2004a) conducted subject-led tours of her participants' homes. She found that in every home there was an important religious space marked by a *mandir*, which is a Hindu sacred home temple. Each one contained an assortment of religious relics and significant objects including, for example, water from the Ganges and paper images of gurus. With an interest in how the materiality of these temples intersect with the

women's' sense of home, belonging and identity, Tolia-Kelly (2004a: 318-19) argues that,

'they are solidified tangible points of connection to the past narratives of migration, landscapes and environments of belonging. They are inclusive of both historical and geographical memories of lived environments and their cultures of living...the shrines are significant as points of engagement with being, living and developing a history in England'.

In other words, for the women in her study, the home shrines play an important role in diasporic memory, acting as both a signifier of past lives, but also the dynamic creation of the present home.

This focus on the materiality of the home shrine reflects a wider trend in the migration and home literature, which has increasingly used 'home possessions' such as photographs (Walsh, 2006a), paintings (Walsh, 2006b) and food (Law, 2001; Petridou, 2001; Duruz, 2005; Abdullah, 2010) as key devices through which to think about migrants' changing relationship to home. Indeed, as Woodward (2007:29) argues, 'one of the basic insights of recent conceptualisations of material culture studies is the idea that objects have 'social lives' or 'biographies' (see Appadurai, 1986; Kopytoff, 1986; Hoskins, 1998). These objects are thereby imbued with personal meanings and relationships and thus represent material flows carrying 'symbolic baggage' (Oakes & Schein, 2006: 21). Within this vein, and given that 'especially for migrants, 'home' as a site where everyday life is lived may not coincide with the meaning of home as a sense of belonging' (Walsh, 2011: 516), Walsh (2006b: 123) decided to think 'about belonging through belongings'. In a paper based on the lives of British expatriates in Dubai, she focused on owners' understandings of a painting, a plastic bowl, and a DVD, to show how these objects satisfied a 'desire for mnemonics', and helped re-create past homes while also contributing to current and future ones. Similarly, Nowicka (2007) has underlined the centrality of material objects to United Nations staff members' experiences of home. Frequently moving from country to country, Nowicka (2007)

argues that home is a space 'in becoming', constructed through the emplacement of significant material objects that are not tied to any fixed location. For Nowicka (2007) 'home', and a sense of belonging, are created therefore through the dynamic displacing and replacing of significant material objects.

In a further paper Walsh (2011) turns to consider the intersections between materiality, migrant masculinities and home. She finds that in the absence of acts that had previously defined their masculinity prior to migration, such as lawn mowing, men turn to material objects to assert their 'manliness'. For one participant this meant displaying a large tiger fish in a prominent position in his home, which acted as both a symbol and invitation to conservation. Indeed, 'as a trophy, the fish acts as a visual anchor: Matt can make and narrate his masculinity through association with sporting prowess' (Walsh, 2011: 523). Meanwhile, in another unusual paper analysing one British woman's everyday practices of belonging in Dubai, Walsh (2006b) shows how materiality is also important for migration beyond simply 'home possessions'. By adopting an ethnographic approach Walsh (2006b) finds that while 'home possessions' were of only limited significance to her participant, the act of cleaning, tidying, rearranging furniture, and removing objects from her new home was. Through these domestic acts therefore the participant sought to stamp her belonging, and 'help to divest the villa of the meanings attached by previous residents and make a statement to those still living there about how she would like the house to be' (Walsh, 2006a: 273).

The material gaze is not however restricted to objects alone, rather buildings and the built environment more generally have also been examined. Mitchell's (2004) chapter on 'Monster Houses' is a key example of this, and is based on research undertaken in an elite Vancouver suburb on the homes of a wealthy group of migrants from Hong Kong. Through a close examination of their choices in domestic architecture, Mitchell (2004) shows how debates around citizenship and democracy can become symbolised in the physical landscape. Meanwhile, within the context of religion and the home, DeRogatis (2003) has studied nineteenth century Protestant home missions in Ohio's

Western Reserve. Through an analysis of maps, letters, and religious tracts she uncovered how these missionaries perceived a correlation between the development of the physical appearance of the land and the cultivation of souls. In other words, the material landscape was the litmus test of the godly community. Structure and spirituality therefore intertwined as the physical world became a vehicle for expressing religious sentiments.

In this section then, I have reviewed work on religion and home, and migration, identity and belonging, that has taken a material lens. In doing so I have shown how the materiality of the home, both in terms of home possessions and architecture, are wrapped up in the wider dynamics of personal expression, memory and the process of 'making home'. Combined with the earlier discussion of *home as spectacle* therefore, I have laid out the themes which Chapter Seven picks up, and expands upon, as part of its examination of the perceived ideals and lived realities of mission, and how these are experienced and negotiated.

Concluding Remarks

This thesis is broadly concerned with the geographical trajectories of Evangelical missionaries as they migrate to, and live in, Albania. Arising out of which it asks, what are the rationales shaping missionaries' migration to Albania? What are the transnational social relations that enable missionaries to migrate to, and live in, Albania, and how (if at all) do they manifest themselves in missionary life? And finally, what are the perceived ideals and realities of mission, and how are these experienced and negotiated? In order to address these questions the research was led to take a multi-scalar approach, moving between the geopolitical, transnational and domestic. This is reflected in the organisation of this chapter (and the thesis more widely), which has moved between four key themes: the broad issue of positioning of the missionary with a migration framework; missionary geopolitics and migration; transnationalism, and proximity/ distance, and home.

In particular I made two key initial arguments, each of which this thesis critically responds to: first, to date research has largely focused on immigrants, resulting in only a limited understanding of the relationship between religion and migration; second, it is essential that researchers take religious identities seriously, and tease out the full implications of a religious worldview. Building on which, I turned to the geopolitical scale and began by pulling together literature from across *religion and geopolitics*, *missionary geopolitics*, and the *geopolitics of migration*. Having discussed each in turn I argued for the importance of cross-fertilising research, and signposted how an examination of missionaries' choice of Albania as mission destination in Chapter Five brings all three into productive tension. Next, I anticipated Chapter Six's focus on missionaries' transnational social relations by beginning with a brief review of three key ways in which transnational space has been conceptualised. Building on which, I went on to highlight the salience of the geographical concept of proximity/distance to the research findings. In doing so I argued that within much of the literature around transnationalism, there is an embedded assumption that spatial distance is something preferably overcome. As I find in Chapter Six however, rather than something to be vilified, spatial distance can in fact be productive for maintaining 'proximal' transnational relationships. Finally, I turned to examine research around religion and the home. Aware of the dearth of research in this specific area, I drew together work from wider home, and home and migration research, around the themes of *Home as Spectacle* and *Home and Materiality* to foreground Chapter Seven's focus on home as contested space. Consequently, this chapter has traversed the geopolitical, transnational and domestic, pulling together insights from geography, the social sciences more generally, and missiology, in order to illuminate 'migration with a mission'.

Researching Mission and Migration: The Research Design

The overall aim of my research is to examine the geographical trajectories of contemporary Evangelical missionaries as they migrate to, and embed themselves in, Albania. This chapter discusses the research design that I constructed to address this research objective. To start with I introduce one of the major criticisms levelled against research around religion, and discuss the thesis' approach to 'translation'. The second section locates the research, and provides an outline of the phases of fieldwork. In the third section I turn to discuss 'finding the field' and in section four I discuss how I gained access to the participants in the study. Here I introduce the concept of the 'man of peace', and draw a distinction between this and the more common term 'gatekeeper'. Section five gives a detailed profile of the participants, focusing in particular on facets of theology, nationality, age and marital status amongst the cohort. In section six I turn to outline the rationale behind the choice of methods employed in this study. In the penultimate section I then reflect on my own positionality within the research, and in particular my role as *insider/outsider*; *impression management* and *spiritual vulnerability and friendship*. Finally, the chapter ends with a discussion of the challenges of 'studying up', arguing for further recognition of the struggles over power and representation between researcher and researched. Taken together this chapter makes a wider methodological contribution by not only signposting the difficulties of working with 'closed' communities, but also positing strategies that future researchers might adopt to overcome these issues.

Researching Religion: Translation

In recent years the study of religion has enjoyed a revival within geography (Ley & Tse, 2013) and the social sciences more widely. The social sciences, of which geography is a part, developed across Europe from the mid 19th century onwards (Humphrey, 2008:111). Over the years key figures within this wider tradition, including David Hume,

Auguste Comte, Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Karl Marx, Herbert Spencer, Edward Tyler, Emile Durkheim, Carl Jung and Sigmund Freud, have written about religion. Despite dissent over other topics, Stark and Finke (2000: 29-30) underline that when it came to the key issues of religion, 'there was remarkable consensus' amongst the scholars 'that religion is false and harmful....that religion is doomed....that religion is an epiphenomenon...[and] that religion is fundamentally psychological'. In other words, religion was deemed to have no external reality, that it was not 'real', but rather reflected a particular mental state. In recent years some scholars have however criticised this reductionist stance. In *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement* for example, Miller and Yamamori (2007:219) write that, 'while it is not our intention to debate the ontological reality of the Holy Spirit, we honour the experience of Pentecostals and their claim that their faith is based on something other than their own human projections.' Similar to Miller and Yamamori (2007) this thesis looks to honour the reality of God for the participants. At times however, and as the following excerpt reveals, I fell short of this ideal. This is illustrated by the exchange below, which took place between myself and a missionary doctor:

Interview Transcript, Brian

CB: But do you think the life you're living, and being here having made sacrifices for your faith, has influenced those people?

B: Not for my faith, it's for my master. Be careful with that. We are offended by that. Because it's not about me, it's not about my sacrifice, it's about pleasing my Master. It's about making the best music together that we can make. Just a little note there.

CB: I didn't mean to offend

B: It's easy for you, a sociologist or something, to just start, OK
[waves hand around]

CB: I wasn't meaning to dumb anything down

B: There's a higher reality at work here, and we are committed to that. And we've staked our families and our lives and our futures on that.

CB: I'm not trying to boil this down to any essentialist analysis

B: It's because you're a post modernist

CB: Says who? [laughter]

B: Probably. Just because of your age, and the culture you come from. I don't know, I'm sorry, I shouldn't judge off the bat! You have a little mission here that is potentially very significant. You get to look at something that academic literature in the last 50 or 60 years has ignored. They just said naturalism, there clearly is no higher power, people believe that and it sorts of helps them, the weak ones or whatever. But I think that's wrong. I think God is much more active than academics have given him credit for in the last years. And I think you have a chance to bring that kind of thought in a small way into academia. And I commend you for that.

When analysing the information that I gathered in the field, and writing it up, this conversation frequently returned to my thoughts, and pointed to one of the major difficulties of studying religious lives. As Martin (2006: 20) acknowledges, 'rescripting is a precarious business...above all not to be conducted as though what believers say is

fantasy waiting for analytic solvents to transfer it to some more basic category'. Yet in order to produce a meaningful and theoretically compelling piece of academic research I needed to move beyond simply describing, or 'laying bare how members of a social group interpret the world around them' (Bryman, 2004:15). Rather, I was involved in a process of 'plac[ing] the interpretations that have been elicited into a social scientific frame. There is a double interpretation going on: the researcher is providing an interpretation of other's interpretations'. (Bryman, 2004: 15). Yet crucially, I have not looked to move away from the religious logic that the participants communicated to me. Instead I have been influenced by both Hauerwas (2000) and Milbank (2006: 90-1, 122) who as Ley and Tse (2013: 156) explain, stress that 'one cannot abstract religious life from its own belief system; personal and social religious life is embedded within the system of belief and practice, not out of it'. Put another way, I have heeded Yorgason and della Dora's (2009: 629) call for 'geographers to allow religion to 'speak back'. Consequently this thesis teases out the meaning and world-views of the participants, not to subject them to reductionist arguments, but to try to explicate them within their own right, and then to ask what they bring to, and how they complicate, commonplace ideas in the social sciences around migration, geopolitics, transnationalism and home.

Locating the Research

The majority of the research was undertaken in Tirana, the capital of Albania. According to data from a 2011 national census, the population of Tirana within city limits is 419,000¹⁶. Founded as an Ottoman town in 1614 by Sulejman Bargjini, it became Albania's capital city in 1920, and is widely recognised as the largest political, economic, and cultural hub in the country. I decided to base my research in this bustling city because I gathered from missionary blogs, Evangelical church websites, message boards, and mission organisations' websites, that this was where the majority of my potential research participants resided. Moreover, I was aware of a report undertaken by VUSH and AEP in 2003 that found that 'the Evangelical church [in

¹⁶ See <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/al.html> [Accessed 19th March 2012]

Albania] is largely an urban phenomenon'(10). Given that my research is not concerned with a geographically bound group of people, as for example with a church congregation, but rather with dispersed individuals, it was indeed crucial to consider where I could find their highest concentration. Finally, I gathered that Tirana also attracted a large number of missionaries who passed through the city to collect supplies, and to pick up people from the airport, as well as to visit the headquarters of the Albanian Encouragement Project (AEP), which I will introduce later. Consequently, I chose Tirana as the base for both periods of fieldwork. The research unfolded in two phases:

Phase One (April 2010 - September 2010)

Prior to the main period of empirical research I decided to spend 6 months in Tirana undertaking intensive Albanian language training. I chose Tirana because this is where the best language training facilities were available, and also because I already envisaged undertaking my research in the capital. While the research itself was not centered around native Albanian speakers, I was aware that the ability to speak the language would be valuable for my everyday well-being. At the same time I wanted to make initial contact with the Evangelical community, and to become a familiar figure amongst them. I chose to hire an Albanian language tutor and to take my lessons in the Stephen Centre, which is a café run by Evangelical missionaries. I developed a good relationship with the café manager, which later proved invaluable given his willingness to introduce me to people. Moreover, in the second stage of the research, to which I will shortly turn, missionaries often commented that they recognised me. Typically they would then remember that they had often seen me working diligently on Albanian grammar at one of the café tables. This visibility, coupled with my knowledge of the language, seemed to earn me some 'cache' with the missionaries. Indeed, several participants commended me on my commitment to trying to learn the language, and shared commiserations of its difficulty! Beyond being crucial to my general sense of well-being therefore, a working knowledge of Albanian also helped establish rapport

between myself and my participants, who were typically also engaged in an on-going process of language learning.

Phase Two (April 2011 - November 2011)

I spent 8 months carrying out the bulk of the empirical research for this study. The majority of my time was spent in Tirana, where I rented a one bed apartment close to the city centre. From this point I was able to walk, bike, or use the public transport system to move around Tirana and meet with participants. I also travelled by coach and minibus to visit missionaries in Shengjin, Lezhë, Durrës, Lushnjë, Elbasan, Peqin, Vlorë and Gjirokastër, as shown on the map overleaf (Figure 3.1).

I had not originally intended to travel outside of Tirana, but as the research progressed I became convinced of its necessity. This decision was based on two factors: first, at times I found it difficult to locate participants who were willing to take part in the study in Tirana, as I discuss later. Second, I decided that perspectives from missionaries living outside of the capital might provide a useful counterpoint to what I had already learnt. From Tirana I was able to travel by *furgon* (minibus) to Lezhë, Durrës, Lushnjë and Vlorë for day trips, where I met and interviewed missionaries. In Shengjin, a small seaside town, I stayed with a female missionary for two days and from there we visited another missionary living in Lezhë. I also spent one week staying with two missionary girls in Elbasan, interviewed two missionary couples in Gjirokastër, and was welcomed into a further missionary couple's home in Gjirokastër for one evening, on two separate occasions.



Figure 3.1: Map of Fieldwork Locations in Albania

'Finding the Field': The Initial Stages

Unlike studies that have looked at 'bounded' sites such as migrant churches, this research was interested in a group of geographically dispersed individuals. From my previous experience during fieldwork phase one, I was aware that 'finding the field' (see Markowitz, 2001; Ortner, 2010) would be challenging, since missionaries lived and worked across Tirana, and indeed Albania more widely. With this in mind, I tried to make contact with some missionaries before I left the UK. For example, prior to beginning the second phase of fieldwork I attended a talk in Croydon by the Albanian Encouragement Mission (AEM). There I introduced myself to Grant Jones, the director of the mission organisation, and explained my research. We exchanged email addresses and I wrote to him asking if he would be happy to connect me with the AEM missionaries currently in Albania. He sought their permission, and replied with seven email addresses that I then contacted, inviting them to be part of the project. At the same time I trawled the internet for missionary blogs, and church newsletters, seeking an idea of where and how missionaries 'hung out', alongside their contact details. This helped me to have an initial idea of what kind of work people were doing and where, the churches that were popular with foreign missionaries, and the public spaces that they often frequented.

When I arrived in Tirana I spent several days walking the city, creating an up to date list of Evangelical church services and their times, with a view to locating further missionaries. Following my fieldwork experiences during phase one, I also decided to 'hang out' at spaces that I already knew were popular with missionaries. The most important of these were the Stephen Centre and the AEP office.

The Stephen Centre

The Stephen Centre (Plate 3.1, 3.2) was established in October 1994 by a missionary couple. Under the Communists the building had been an eavesdropping centre,

equipped with around 500 phone lines, one tap and no toilets. Taking this shell, Ian and Victoria developed it into a busy coffee shop, restaurant, and bed and breakfast. Some of the proceeds from the businesses go towards planting and supporting affiliated churches, of which there are now five in Albania and one in Kosovo. In addition the Stephen Centre also supports a Christian radio station, orphanages, and 'village ministries' across Albania. Meanwhile, located next door is the first ever Christian bookshop in Albania. The Stephen Centre is therefore at the heart of an extensive missionary network. Indeed, while the website states that it was 'established to serve the Albanian, Foreign and Missionary Community', it appeared that the latter made up the majority of their patrons.

I arrived to begin my fieldwork on a Monday, and therefore missed the Sunday church services running across the capital. I had also yet to receive any email replies from the AEM missionaries that I had contacted. Unsure about where to begin my research, I decided to start at the Stephen Centre. The following fieldnotes are taken from the first week of my research, and detail an encounter in the Stephen Centre between myself and the first missionary that I met during my fieldwork:

Fieldnotes, Stephen Centre, 19th April 2011

I set about reading Spradley's book on Participant Ethnography with due diligence. Maybe an hour passed until, finally, at around 11.30am a young man loped in and sat at a table across the room. Wearing a navy blue 'bible study' hoody and glasses, he immediately removed a laptop from his bag, and my interest was piqued. I heard him order a large pepperoni pizza in Albanian. He leaned back in his seat and took out a further piece of electrical equipment which looked akin to an iPad. Periodically I'd look over and he'd catch me. Likewise, I felt his gaze as I pretended to read my book, stealing glances fervently. It felt like we were locked in a process of trying to figure each other out - looking for markers which would tell us something about each other, and what our reason for being in Albania was.

Indeed, my pile of English titled books stacked on the cafe table, mac laptop, and blonde hair blue eyed appearance had peaked his interest too. This continued for a good half an hour before I finally made the decision that this research would probably never progress until I took a risk. Another 10 minutes passed, egging myself on, feeling the impetus to rise from my seat, but letting nerves get the better of me. Finally, I summoned the courage to weave through the tables and chairs separating us, and approach his table:

"Hi, I know this might sound like a bit of a strange question, but do you speak English?"

"Yeah, sure"

"Do you mind if i sit down a minute?"

"Go for it"

"It's just that i'm writing a PhD about missionaries and I couldn't help but see your jumper"

"Yeah I'm a missionary"

"Oh that's cool, I arrived recently and I've been wondering how to meet some missionaries - it seems you're quite elusive!"

"Haha, well you've come to the right place!"

The Stephen Centre was indeed 'the right place' for me to meet missionaries. It was to become my main base, and I spent several days a week 'hanging out' there. In practical terms it was a useful space for me, since the free wireless internet and air conditioning meant that I was able to use it as a convenient office. I would frequently spend whole days there, typing up notes, interviews, or reading. More importantly however, I found that by spending time at the Stephen Centre I was able to identify missionaries, and further become a 'familiar face' in the community. In the first few weeks of my research the Stephen Centre was therefore the main 'field' of research. Seated at my regular table, which gave me a good view across the whole of the cafe, I was able to recognise people from missionary blogs and church newsletters, watch missionaries greet each other, and listen to their conversations. Indeed, long after I had made personal contact

with missionaries, I continued to use this space to do what Ortner (2010:213) calls 'interface ethnography...doing participant observation in the border areas where the closed community...interfaces with the public'. Moreover, in the excerpt above I approached William, and announced myself and my research to him. As time passed however more natural social encounters emerged, as I 'bumped into' participants, and they sometimes then introduced me to other missionaries who happened to be there too. The Stephen Centre was therefore an important social space for my research, as interactions there expanded my network of participants, and in turn the 'field' of my research.



Plate 3.1 Photograph Taken of the Outside of the Stephen Centre (Author, June 2011)



Plate 3.2 Photograph Taken Inside the Stephen Centre (Author, May 2011)

AEP Office

The AEP was founded in October 1991 and 'functions as an umbrella organisation for its members and provides a united front before the Albanian government and international agencies'¹⁷. At the time of research the AEP had over 70 Evangelical missionary organisation members. Established with the aim of avoiding the duplication of missionary efforts, today the AEP is largely regarded as providing valuable assistance to missionaries in the following ways: operating a postal service; assisting with obtaining residency permits; issuing updates on new laws and the political situation; running a Yahoo group for the exchange of information and ideas; offering access to a fax machine and photocopier; stocking devotional books; organising seminars; negotiating mobile phone contracts; and bringing together missionaries at national meetings, regional meetings and on a smaller scale, at the office itself.

¹⁷ See <http://www.aepfoundation.org/aboutus.php> [Accessed 27th March 2009]



Plate 3.3 : Photograph of the Outside of the AEP Office (Author, May 2011)

For the majority of the fieldwork the office was housed in a beautiful old embassy, tucked away behind large iron gates off of one of Tirana's busiest roads (Plate 3.3). It shared the building with VUSH, otherwise known as the Albanian Evangelical Brotherhood (Vëllazëria Ungjillore e Shqipërisë). While at times their remit overlapped, it was generally accepted that the AEP was concerned with serving foreign missionaries, while VUSH dealt with Albanian Evangelical church matters, and Albanian missionaries. The AEP office comprised of two rooms, one of which had an informal seating area where a sofa and arm chair were placed around a coffee table next to a make-shift library, while the other housed several desks and computers. During my first phase of fieldwork I had visited the AEP offices and enjoyed an hour long conversation with Patrick, a staff member at the AEP. Upon arriving in Tirana for the second leg of fieldwork I decided to re-establish contact with the AEP, and went to the offices during their 'fellowship' hours. When I arrived I introduced myself to the receptionist, and was able to speak to Patrick, who remembered me from the year previous. He later

introduced me to Adam, a key figure at the AEP, who agreed to meet me later that week for a coffee. As I discuss in the following section, this was an important meeting that allowed me access to the AEP offices on a regular basis. Consequently, much like the Stephen Centre, the AEP became a place where I could go for coffee, 'hang out', and meet potential participants. Indeed, this strategy proved particularly useful for Stutzman (1999) who had previously utilised the AEP office as a space to engage with both missionaries based in the capital, and those moving through.

The Stephen Centre and the AEP office were therefore two key sites that initially constituted the 'field' of my research. The connections that I made through spending time at these places led the field to broaden however, expanding across and outside the geography of Tirana. For example, interviews sometimes took place in missionaries' homes, and occasionally I was invited to social events including a missionary's birthday meal, a play, takeaway evenings at a single female missionary's house and walks to the top of Mount Dajiti and through Tirana's central park. These events were however spread across the city, and I found I was always on the move, using a bicycle I had bought to get from place to place. Much like Bornstein (2005a: 40) therefore, I found that I was 'constantly reassessing the margins of my field site. The field, [was] indeed a mythic place'.

Access to Participants: Finding 'Men of Peace'

In the introduction to her book, *Bible Believers: Fundamentalists in the Modern World*, Ammerman (1987:10) asserts that carrying out a study of Fundamentalism is challenging, if not 'often nearly impossible'. Indeed, Ammerman (1987) cites her religious identity as a key factor in her ability to gain admission. Meanwhile, in several studies undertaken around missionaries (see Swanson, 1995; Hovland, 2009; 2011), researchers explained that they have direct family connections to the mission communities they studied, and that it is because of this that they were granted access. Unfortunately however I cannot call myself an Evangelical Christian, nor am I the

descendent of a missionary. Instead, I found gaining 'access to participants' to be a highly demoralising experience. Before I had begun the research I had perhaps naively thought that missionaries would be happy to speak to me, particularly since their 'job description' involved talking about and sharing news of Christ. Indeed, several scholars have contended that securing access to prosleytising groups can be relatively easy since researchers are viewed as potential converts (Robbins et al, 1973; Rochford, 1985; Barker, 1987). Yet I quickly realised that this was not necessarily the case since, in the words of one of my participants, 'missionaries are secretive people, they are very closed, you'd never think it would you?' (Ian). In the last section I detailed two of the key spaces where I was able to locate potential participants. Here I turn to discuss the challenge of encouraging the missionaries I encountered to be part of the research.

Reporters, Researchers and Albania's Pyramid Scheme

In December 1996 and early 1997 'pyramid schemes' in Albania began to collapse, resulting in widespread social unrest. As 'tens of thousands of Albanians lost their entire life savings' (Vickers & Pettifer, 1997: 290), public demonstrations and mass violence began to escalate. During this time there was a call from the Albanian government for foreigners to be evacuated. In response the US embassy arranged for their citizens to be airlifted to safety, while the British were sent in ships from Durrës to Italy. Missionaries were however amongst some of the last to leave, and became the focus of intense media attention. I first became aware of this when I was asked, and on occasion accused by others, of being a reporter. In their work on religious groups' relationships with the media, both Wilkes (1992) and Wosk (1995) found that religious communities often feel that they have little incentive to speak to the press, citing experiences of misrepresentation. This was certainly the case during my research, and I heard countless stories of how missionaries' felt that reporters had misquoted them, or used their words out of context. The majority of these instances revolved around the 1997 incident. For example Donald, a missionary in the south of Albania, explained that he had told a reporter at that time 'something like, there is evil here', but was instead quoted as saying 'they [Albanians] are evil'. I found that these negative experiences

with reporters translated into a suspicion of my work, and an unwillingness to engage with me. Indeed, at points it was difficult to not only convince people that I was not a reporter, but also to explain the difference between journalism and my own academic work. Further, aware of the 'bad name' that anthropology has amongst missionaries, I also avoided using this label throughout the fieldwork process (see Stipe, 1980; Pels, 1990; Van der Geest, 1990; Jorgensen, 2011).

The feeling of people's suspicion dogged me as time and time again I encountered either outright rudeness, or something closer to a polite dismissal of my research. On one occasion I approached a pastor after a church service to introduce myself and my research, and to ask if he would have a chance to meet up for a coffee sometime. He replied that he didn't have many 'chances' and so he would not have a 'chance' to speak with me. I furthered that I would be in the country for several more months, and so hopefully there would be a better time for him later in my research. He again repeated, in a not particularly kindly manner, 'I won't have a chance'. And with that he left me abruptly, turning on his heel and walking a little down the street to talk to other congregants. I found these experiences extremely discouraging, and struggled to establish myself as a credible, non-saluticous researcher in the eyes of the missionary community. In hindsight I see that my access to the missionary community hinged on being endorsed by authority figures in the community, or as one participant put it by 'men of peace'.

Finding 'Men of Peace'

During my research a Canadian missionary named Karen introduced me to the term 'man of peace'. It is a phrase that originates from Luke 10: 5-7, where Jesus said to 72 of his followers,

'When you enter a house, first say, 'Peace to this house.' ⁶ If someone who promotes peace is there, your peace will rest on them; if not, it will return

to you. ⁷ Stay there, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages.'

In recent years the term has become popular amongst church planters. In a blog post the Vice President of Global Church Planting with CityTeam International¹⁸ explains that,

'In the Person of Peace¹⁹ strategy, the evangelist has one job – Find the Person of Peace. This person may be from any walk of life, but he or she will welcome you, listen to your message, help you with your livelihood, and allow you to stay in the home, and influence his or her family and the community for the sake of the Gospel.'²⁰

This term evokes a figure similar to what academic literature would call a 'gatekeeper'. Gatekeepers are 'those individuals in an organisation that have the power to grant or withhold access to people or situations for the purposes of the research' (Burgess, 1984:48). At the same time it denotes a more personal relationship, not simply of granting access, but also of continued involvement, and support.

Throughout the research period I negotiated with 'gatekeepers' in the more traditional sense, and also as 'men of peace'. The first gatekeeper I encountered in Albania was Adam, a senior staff member at the AEP. Gaining the co-operation of the AEP was of paramount importance since the majority of Evangelical missionaries in Albania were affiliated with it. In addition to wanting to use their office space as a place to 'hang out' and meet potential participants, their endorsement would enable me to attend AEP

¹⁸ 'Cityteam is a nondenominational Christian non-profit serving the poor, the homeless, and the lost in local communities in the United States and around the world' <http://www.cityteam.org/international/> [Accessed January 14th 2013]

¹⁹ While the participants typically referred to a man or men of peace, the gender neutral term, person, is also used in wider Evangelical literature.

²⁰ <http://www.davidlwatson.org/about/> [Accessed 7th August 2012]

social events, regional meetings, and conferences, where I would be able to network further. Having visited the AEP offices, Adam accepted my invitation to meet up for a coffee. I shared the details of my research objectives with him and his wife at a cafe, and Adam requested that I send him a letter from my University confirming that I was indeed enrolled as a doctoral student. In addition he asked for a copy of a chapter that I had recently had published on a Faith Based Development organisation based in Albania (Brickell, C, 2012b). Following receipt of these he invited me to give a speech about my research at the AEP Tirana regional meeting on May 11th 2011. This was a pivotal moment in the research process, as not only was I able to introduce myself and my work to a 100 strong audience, but this event also afforded me credibility. Nearing the end of the research Adam also gave me the opportunity to run two focus groups at the AEP national conference in Budva. While over the course of the research I did not interact with Adam on a regular basis, his agreement to allow me to spend time at the AEP office, and to present at the AEP regional and national meetings, was key to raising my profile in the community, and encouraging missionaries to take part in the research. Indeed, 'it is a truism that the success of a research project which relies on data-gathering from respondents and organisations turns on securing access, or simply 'getting in' (Ryan & Lewer, 2012: 75).

Beyond this more 'official' gatekeeper, several key missionary figures took on the role of 'men of peace'. These missionaries were invaluable since not only did they connect me to other missionaries, but at times they also provided much needed support and encouragement. Indeed, over the course of the research I had to face rejection on a regular basis. Besides encounters similar to that with the aforementioned pastor, countless emails went unanswered, and phone calls and texts ignored. Christine Williams, the author of the ethnography *Inside Toyland* shared in an interview that, 'the hardest part of qualitative research for me is the emotional work involved in contacting gatekeepers and potential respondents' (cited in Fenstermaker & Jones, 2011: 210). Following her experience I found (what felt like) constant rebuttals emotionally draining (see Humble, 2012; Punch, 2012; Sanderson, 2012 for recent work on emotion in fieldwork), and at times it led me to question my own validity as a researcher. These key

missionary figures, who took on the role as 'men of peace' were essential to the success of the research as they emailed and called their friends on my behalf, challenging them to take part. In other words, they were catalysts to a form of snowball sampling, which Valentine (2005:177) describes as 'using one contact to help you recruit another contact, who in turn can put you in touch with someone else'. William, the first missionary that I made contact with did however make an interesting comment regarding this process, telling me: 'I'm being helpful but trying not to appear helpful, not to you, but to everyone else. I don't want to seem to be hassling them you know, do this, do this!'. Indeed, while these 'men of peace' wanted to be helpful, there was also a sense at times that they needed to be careful about how their involvement was regarded by the wider missionary community. Nevertheless identifying 'men of peace', as well as practicing 'interface ethnography' (Ortner, 2010: 213) and were key methodological tools in interacting with such a 'closed' community.

In addition, following the first phase of the research I was aware that some missionaries in Tirana go on holiday, or undertake fundraising outside of Albania in the summer months. Typically this process seemed to take place between June and September, when staying in Tirana's heat becomes increasingly uncomfortable. With this in mind I was aware that I needed to 'hit the ground running'. This meant establishing relationships with participants as quickly as possible, and being conscious of their travel plans, and thus when they would be available. The summer months were not however wasted, and instead I used them as an opportunity to travel to meet missionaries outside of the capital, as well as engaging with those who had stayed behind. Beyond the challenge of missionaries' availability, time became a further obstacle to my accessing participants. More specifically, time was typically viewed as an extremely valuable commodity, and often I was told that potential participants simply couldn't spare me the time, or that they did not think it was worth doing so. Karen, one of the key 'men of peace' in this study, asked me one day if my ears were burning. She had just been talking about me with another missionary, and expressed her regret that they didn't want to be part of the project, saying that they felt it wouldn't be 'the best use of [their] time'. Accessing participants was therefore a highly difficult task, dependent on a

number of factors including my ability to: allay suspicion, find and maintain relationships with 'men of peace', and be flexible according to the time participants were willing to share with me.

The Participants: A Profile

Over the course of the research I conducted 53 life-focused interviews, 76 semi-structured interviews and 3 focus group interviews with 87 participants²¹ from 17 different mission organisations. Of these participants 9 were Albanian Evangelicals, pastors and missionaries, 5 were short-term foreign missionaries,²² and the remaining 73 were long-term foreign missionaries.²³ In this section I contextualise these individuals, and reflect on their theology, affiliation to particular mission organisations, nationality, gender, marital status, lifecourse, and finally, occupation. This is intended to give the reader an appreciation of the wider biographies of the missionaries that will feature throughout the coming chapters.

At the same time, it is important to note that I will not discuss participants' individual details. Further, I have chosen not to include what is often a customary table, detailing participants' key demographic information. This decision was informed by a two fold resistance that I encountered during the fieldwork. First, I experienced a number of occasions during which participants felt extremely uneasy about their specific details being shared with a wider audience, even if their names were removed. Indeed, there was a general sense that individuals preferred that as little as possible was known about them. This joins up with the earlier discussion around the difficulties I faced in recruiting

²¹ With each participant I did a combination of some or all forms of interviewing. Sometimes I also undertook more than one semi-structured interview with a participant on separate occasions.

²² I classify short-term missionaries as those individuals who have committed to staying in Albania anywhere between 1 week and 6 months. This is based on feedback from the participants themselves.

²³ I classify long-term missionaries as those individuals who have committed to staying in Albania anywhere from 6 months upwards.

participants. Second, prior to the commencement of my fieldwork a 'Muslim' website had obtained a list of missionaries' names and addresses and released them online. This had led to a sense of vulnerability, and a heightened sensitivity to being visible in a public arena. Informed by this, I have felt a sense of responsibility to 'do no harm' to my participants, even if this harm is only 'perceived' rather than 'real'. At the same time however, I understand the need to provide the reader with pertinent information about participants' backgrounds. Aware of my position on this tightrope, in the following section I look to contextualise the participants in this thesis by summarising trends across the cohort around particular axes of identity.

Theological Background and Missionary Commitment

Of the 87 participants, all could be classified as Evangelical. In its broadest sense Evangelicalism is a form of Protestant Christianity, within which there is some theological diversity. In this study for example, while participants were comfortable with being identified as Evangelical, they sometimes also referred to themselves with more specific terms, including: Evangelical Protestant; Conservative Evangelical; Non-Denominational; Baptist; Independent Baptist; Pentecostal; Presbyterian Charismatic; Reformed; and Evangelical Mennonite. Yet running through each of these were several key theological tenets that are typically evoked as defining characteristics of the Evangelical movement as a whole. Summing these up, Hunter (1983:7) identifies Evangelicals by their adherence to 'the belief that the Bible is the inerrant word of God; the belief in the divinity of Christ; the belief in the efficacy of Christ's life, death, and physical resurrection for the salvation of the human soul'.

In terms of their commitment to working in Albania, across the 73 long-term missionaries that I engaged with, the shortest stay was 3 months (with a view to several years of commitment), and the longest an uninterrupted stretch of 17 years. Clearly therefore, within the category of 'long-term' there was a large sliding scale of what period the participants had resided in the country. What connected them however was

a commitment to giving several years, if not their whole lives, to serving God as missionaries to Albania.

Mission Organisations

The participants in this study were members of a number of different mission organisations and agencies. Between them there was variety in how missionaries were recruited, the initial amount of money that they needed to raise before they could go to the field, the way in which funding was managed, the frequency with which they were expected to ‘report back’, and the extent to which organisations prescribed how participants should undertake mission itself. In the table below and continuing overleaf (3.1), I have listed the organisations according to the number of long-term missionary participants representing each, moving from the largest to the smallest. In addition I have included their stated aims, taken from each organisations’ website. These reveal the different biases between each mission agency. For example, while some have a particular focus on church planting, others are concerned with locating ‘unreached peoples’, or by acting in a purely administrative capacity. The ways in which this diversity played out became particularly prominent when talking to participants about what kind of missionary work they were undertaking, or how they managed their finances, for example. When addressing missionaries’ geopolitical framing of their migration to Albania, the transnational relationships between themselves and their supporters, and the dynamics of the missionary home, however, the significance of participants’ mission organisations was less noteworthy.

Christar	The vision of Christar is to cultivate Christ-honoring transformation in communities where He is yet to be worshiped.
Campus Crusade for Christ	Win, build, and send Christ-centered multiplying disciples who launch spiritual movements.
‘Touchstone’	A mission reaching out to Muslims with the love of Jesus and helping others to do so.

Albanian Evangelical Mission	Albanian Evangelical Mission aims to make the gospel known to Albanian people.
YWAM	Youth With A Mission is a global movement of Christians from many cultures, age groups, and Christian traditions, dedicated to serving Jesus throughout the world.
Baptist Missionary Society	BMS World Mission is a Christian mission organisation, working in around 35 countries on four continents. BMS personnel are mainly involved in church planting, development, disaster relief, education, health, and media and advocacy.
Assemblies of God World Missions	Assemblies of God World Missions is engaged in missionary endeavor pursuing the original and audacious commitment of our forefathers to unprecedented world evangelism.
Commission to Every Nation	CTEN is a servant organization which helps missionaries fulfill the unique vision God has given them. Through administrative support we provide accountability and help the missionary get to the field. Through pastoral care we help them remain effective and healthy while there.
Mission to Unreached Peoples	Our Vision: All Unreached People Groups (ethnê) reached. Jesus' Command to make disciples of all nations (ethnê) fulfilled.
Operation Mobilisation	Operation Mobilisation works in more than 110 countries, motivating and equipping people to share God's love with people all over the world. OM seeks to help plant and strengthen churches, especially in areas of the world where Christ is least known.
European Christian Mission	ECM's mission is to plant and develop churches throughout Europe. Church planting is our strategy for Europe because only through loving communities can Europe really experience transformational change.
Baptist World Mission	Serving Independent Missionaries and the Churches that Support them since 1961.

Heartland Ministries	Our missions department sends teams around the world for evangelism outreaches, encouragement of local churches, and practical support and training for leaders.
Josiah Venture	To equip young leaders to fulfill Christ's commission through the local church.
Glory International	Going into all the world to preach the Good news, educate people and just lend a helping hand in love.
Didasko Ministries	Didasko staff are currently engaged in Biblically-based ministries of evangelism, discipleship, teaching, preaching, and counseling literally around the world today.
Work International for Christ	Unable to locate website.

Table 3.1: Participants' Mission Organisations

Nationality

Regarding nationality, the majority of the participants were American (See Table 3.2 Overleaf) and made up approximately 59% of those involved in the research. This bias in the sample towards American nationals reflects a wider trend in the Evangelical missionary community in Albania. Indeed, this is reflected in Table 3.3 (Overleaf), which uses percentages to present the relative numbers of Evangelical missionaries, according to nationality, registered with the AEP in 2011. In doing so we see that America and Korea have the largest cohort (a point to which I return to later).

Nationality	Number
American	51
British	16
Albanian	9
Canadian	3
Dutch	2
Brazilian	2
German	1
Lithuanian	1
South African	1
St Lucian	1
Total	87

Table 3.2 Nationality of Participants

Nationality	Percentage
American	44.98
Korean	10.03
British-English	8.09
Dutch	8.09
German	8.09
Brazilian	3.56
South Korean	1.62
Swiss	1.62
Canadian	1.29
Finnish	1.29
French	1.29
Other	10.03
Total	100

*Table 3.3 Nationality of Missionaries
Registered with the AEP*

Further, the dominance of American missionaries is corroborated by figures I obtained from the Department for Migration. According to their records there were 1595 foreign missionaries officially registered in Albania in 2011, of which the largest groups were 535 Italians who were assumed to be Catholic, and 216 Americans. A further 426 foreign nationals (majority American) were recorded as being 'humanitarian workers'. As noted in Chapter One, this title is popularly used as a substitute for missionary. Taken together, it is therefore unsurprising that the majority of participants in this research were American. Consequently the viewpoints of American missionaries, as opposed to other nationalities, feature heavily in this thesis. At the same time as being aware of this, it is important to not overemphasise the role of nationality in the coming chapters. Indeed, the arguments which follow are largely born of a consensus of experience across nationalities.

At the same time, during the fieldwork process I identified that the Korean missionary community was socially and culturally separate from the missionaries that feature in this study. As is shown in table 3.3, of the missionaries registered with the AEP, 10.03% are Korean. Indeed, this follows a worldwide trend, as in recent years Korea has become the second largest missionary sending nation (Christianity Today: NP) after the U.S. Consequently I was keen to speak to Korean missionaries, and actively sought to establish links with them. Unfortunately I encountered several barriers to engagement, the most prolific of which being language. I found that Korean missionaries typically spoke only Korean or Albanian, and while my Albanian was of a reasonable standard, we had problems understanding each other. Although I attempted to locate a translator I was unable to find one. In addition, given that Korean missionaries largely worked and socialised with other Koreans, rather than the wider missionary community, I found that they were harder to meet, or to be introduced to. As a result I have not been able to draw a comparison between Korean missionaries and other missionaries in this study. Future research would benefit from engaging with this exceptional community however, using this case as a way to tease out whether, and to what extent, particular national identities shape missionaries' experience.

Gender, Marital Status and Lifecourse

While I took a snowball approach to sampling, I was also mindful to try and steer the research towards having an even distribution of male and female participants, along with a spread of nationalities, marital statuses and lifecourse stages. This was in order to scope out, as far as possible, the breadth of missionary experience. Despite the often opportunistic way in which I was forced to recruit participants, I was able to produce a near even gender split between the long-term missionaries, as shown in the table below (Table 3.4).

Single	Female	Male	Total
Tirana	12	4	16
Outside Tirana	7	1	8
Total	19	5	24
Married			
Tirana	18	12	30
Outside Tirana	9	10	19
Total	27	22	49

Table 3.4 Gender and Marital Status of Participants

Whilst I looked to replicate this success with regards to marital status, the research included double the number of married participants to those that are single (See Table 3.4). In part this is because married couples often arrived at interviews together. Consequently I was able to meet, and build a relationship with two new participants at one time. More than this however, the number of married couples also reflects the fact that the majority of participants were middle aged and above. Indeed, as one participant explained to me, Albania has seen waves of different kinds of missionaries since the fall of Communism. To start with, when Albania was uncharted territory, scores of young single and newlyweds entered the country, 'and they stayed for about 10 years, and most of them have gone now. And about the time we came another type of missionary, it looks to me, came, and they're families and singles who are sort of middle aged (Brian).'

Occupation

As I stated in the introduction, this thesis moves away from the popular approach of focusing on 'the interaction between missionaries and 'natives', with the resulting effects in the native society' (Hovland, 2006: 198). Rather than focusing on the formal 'work' of mission, it centres on the missionaries themselves, and their experience of 'migration with a mission'. In maintaining this gaze though, I do tease out some of the ways in which missionary 'work' spills over into everyday spaces. For example, as I discuss in Chapter 7, the missionary home is understood an important tool in mission. In terms of missionaries' more established occupations however, the long-term missionaries in this study included a doctor and a nurse, teachers, administrators, publishers, business owners, pastors, youth workers, church planters, evangelists and homemakers.

The Methods

In recent years qualitative methods have been heralded as 'vital to our current practice of human geography' (Delyser et al, 2010: 3). Indeed, this research took a broadly inductive and qualitative approach employing several methods including: life-focused interviews, semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and participant observation, complemented by material gathered in the field, and information from Evangelical missionary blogs, magazines, and the internet. In this section I outline why I selected each method, and how they facilitated the examination of the geographical trajectories of contemporary Evangelical missionaries as they migrate to, and embed themselves in, Albania.

Life-Focused Interviews

In recent years 'migrant stories' have become an increasingly popular way of conducting research into migration (see Halfacree & Boyle, 1993; King et al, 1998;

Lawson, 2000) because of their ability to elicit personal, vibrant and empirically rich accounts. This research was interested in bringing a 'human face' to the missionary movement, and teasing out the intimate facets of missionaries' geographical trajectories. Consequently 'life-focused interviews' (Peacock & Holland, 1993) were identified as an important method for doing this, since 'narratives breathe life into facts' (Peacock & Holland, 1993: 368). I have chosen to use the term 'life-focused interview' rather than 'life history' or 'life story' however, to emphasise that I used this method as a way to discover something 'about the external reality of the story' (Linde, 1993: 48) rather than just how the story itself is constructed. As Peacock and Holland (1993: 368) explain, in this approach 'it is the facts that make the story significant and worth recording'. At the same time as giving primacy to uncovering the factual trajectory of their lives, I did not however altogether ignore the way that participants chose to craft their stories. Rather, I was careful to note particularly emotional language, changes in mood, and emphasis in speech, both in a notepad that I scribbled in after each interview, and on the final transcripts themselves.

During the course of the research I undertook 53 'life-focused' interviews. At the start of the research process I had envisaged completing at least two separate interviews with each participant; a life-focused interview, and a semi structured interview. As the research progressed however I soon realised that this had been an unrealistic expectation. Indeed, as I mentioned previously, time was clearly a precious commodity for the missionaries, and this often forced me to make a decision between which style of interview I should adopt (see Grillo & Stirrat, 1997). In a 'full' interview session however, the 'life-focused' interview would typically last one hour, followed by another hour of semi-structured interviewing. I started each 'life-focused' interview by asking a simple open ended question, such as 'tell me about yourself'. From there I only prompted participants when they seemed to run out of things to say, and typically posed broad questions regarding their home life prior to leaving for Albania, how they became a missionary, and whether they would like to share something with me about their day to day lives as missionaries abroad. Almost all of the interviews were recorded, however in the rare cases that this was not permitted I resorted to writing

notes. I also sometimes scribbled down key words when participants said something that I wanted to follow up on. Rather than breaking their flow I finished each interview by returning to these points and asking the participant if they had anything else they would like to add.

To analyse these interviews I undertook what Hsieh and Shannon (2005) refer to as 'conventional content analysis'. I began by producing typed transcripts, with large margins in which to write comments. Next I read and re-read the transcripts, and underlined the key events in each narrative, as well as highlighting any interesting phrases, or emotional language. At the same time I kept a master document in which I kept track of what kinds of events and sentiments were expressed in the interviews, noting when similarities were found across the documents. In doing so I was engaged in 'inductive category development' (Mayring, 2000), allowing the themes to emerge from the data itself. To start with I mainly coded terms that the participants themselves placed emphasis on. Later, I moved from this style of coding to identify more analytical or abstracted codes. Over time therefore themes became refined, and in turn I began to see how several of them were connected, and how they could be clustered together under broader umbrella themes. I chose to code the data by hand initially since this enabled me to, 'interpret stories and memories in a more nuanced and sensitive way than computer coding would allow' (Blunt, 2003b:84). Later however I also inputted the interviews into NVivo. I decided to do this because of the large volume of material that I was dealing with. Using NVivo I was able to pull out key passages and place them under 'nodes', which were based on the key umbrella events or themes that I had discovered. Below these were 'trees', which comprised of sub-themes. This enabled me to organise common themes across the 53 'life-focused' interviews, enhancing my ability to read all of the relevant data around particular themes. Below is a screen-grab of these nodes and their trees (Figure 3.2), derived from the 'life-focused' interviews (as well as the semi structured interviews, focus groups, and my fieldnotes).

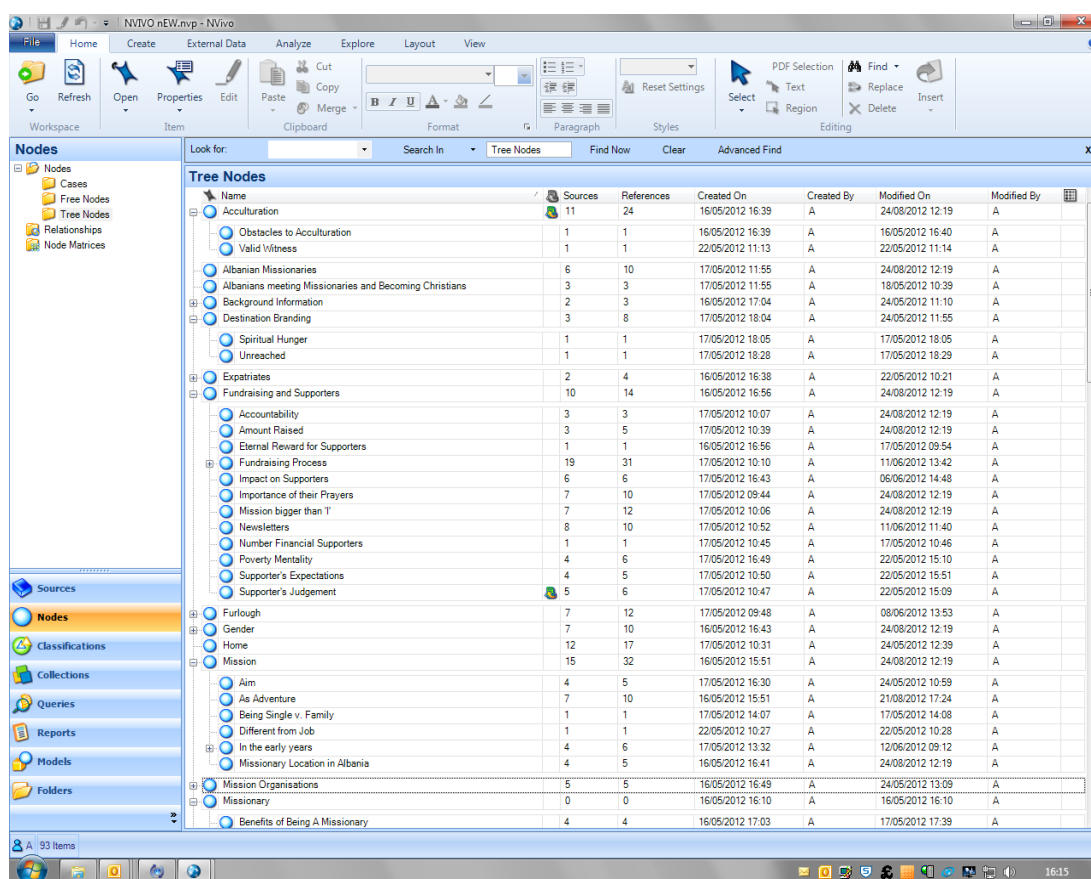


Figure 3.2 NVivo Trees and Nodes

Semi-Structured Interviews

During the course of my fieldwork I conducted 76 semi-structured interviews in total, as shown in the table overleaf (See Table 3.5 Overleaf). Each interview lasted between 40 minutes and 2 and a half hours.

	Interviews In Tirana	No. Participants	Interviews Outside Tirana	No. Participants
Long-Term	51	45	13	17
Short-Term	3	3	1	2
Albanian	8	9	0	0
Total	62	57	14	19

Table 3.5 Semi-Structured Interviews with Participants

Through qualitative interviewing I aimed to produce what Bauer and Gaskell (2000) refer to as 'a fine textured understanding of [the] beliefs, attitudes, values and motivations' of the participants. The majority of the interviews took place at the Stephen Centre, at the request of the participants. The Stephen Centre was felt to be a familiar or safe space for the missionaries, as well as relatively convenient. Elwood and Martin (2000) and Sin (2003) have argued that the spatial context in which an interview is undertaken can affect what is said. The Stephen Centre is an open plan venue, and therefore the interviewees were visible, and potentially could be eavesdropped upon. It is difficult to gauge the impact of this set up, although at times I noted that participants' requested to be seated downstairs, in a less crowded area. Occasionally interviews also took place in people's homes, or in another public site of their choosing. During these times I found Oberhauser's (1997) suggestion of using interviews as an opportunity to also practice participant observation particularly useful. For example, several of my insights in Chapter Seven are drawn from being able to compare missionaries' words with their actual environments, and actions.

The interviews always started with a short introduction to my research, thanking the participant for agreeing to take part, a word on how the research would be used, and permission to use a tape recorder. In addition, I explained that their names would be removed from my writing, and pledged that if I were to ever publish the doctorate as a monograph that they would be given a copy of the manuscript to comment on. I was however clear in underlining that I would only be willing to change factual inaccuracies, and not my interpretation. At the start of the research period I had created a topic guide, which was a single sheet of paper with several headings and sub questions listed on it (see Appendix 1). During the first few interviews I used this as a prompt, and as a way of keeping a check on how long the interview was taking. My eventual goal was to create the conditions for a relaxed 'conversation with a purpose' (Eyles, 1988). With this in mind I managed to learn over time the key lines of questioning, and no longer needed the topic guide on the table in front of me. Yet behind the seemingly casual conversation between myself and the participant, my mind was constantly referring back to this, and monitoring my progress. At times this resulted in what Valentine

(2005: 120) calls 'mental gymnastics, in order to remember which of [my] themes [I] had covered and which [I] need[ed] to bring up later'.

Moreover, the topic guide itself changed over time as I refined my questions, adding in new lines of enquiry and taking others out. In particular I learnt the importance of wording, and became increasingly careful to keep my main questions open enough to allow the interviewee to express their own opinions and experiences, but specific enough to keep them from moving too far from the point of the question (Rubin & Rubin, 2005) During the course of an interview I would also typically use three types of qualitative questioning, main questions; probe questions; and follow up questions (see Rubin & Rubin, 1995). These enabled me to expand on interesting responses, as well as to check my understanding. In addition, I was careful that my questioning did not cause offense to the interviewees. Gruppetta (2008: 191-192) for example, makes a distinction between 'macro' issues relating to 'formalised, standardised issues within faith traditions such as food requirements, dress codes' and 'micro' issues of day to day religiosity. In my case I quickly learnt that I needed to be mindful of how I phrased my questions. For example, during one interview (referenced at the start of this chapter) I asked a participant about the sacrifices they had made for their 'faith'. In response the participant pulled me up on my use of the word 'faith', telling me that sacrifices were made not for 'faith' but for 'God', their 'Master'. The problem here was that the participant felt that I wasn't acknowledging God as a real entity, and was therefore dismissing or dumbing down his beliefs.

To analyse the semi-structured interviews I followed a similar process to the one I undertook for the life-focused interviews. I began by transcribing them, leaving a large margin in order to be able to write notes. Given the volume of data I also hired someone to help with the transcription, and gave them a set stylistic format to follow. The transcripts were then printed out and compiled into lever arch files. I decided to use qualitative content analysis to interpret the transcripts, and so, following MacDonald (2001: 206) I 'picked out what [was] relevant for analysis and pieced it

together to create tendencies, sequences, patterns and orders'. To do this I read each transcript, and highlighted interesting passages, adding a keyword to describe the theme. I also added notes in pencil in the margins. In addition I kept a master document, noting down the themes as they emerged. After this initial stage of analysis I chose to input the transcripts into NVivo, and coded them according to themes (Figure 3.2), again using trees and nodes.

Participant Observation

Across the course of my research I attended church services, social events such as birthday parties, brunches, swing dancing lessons, and casual get-togethers, in order to learn more about my participants. During these more informal occasions I attempted to get to know my participants better, and to be attentive to what they said, what they did, and the environments that they were in. In order to properly document what I found I followed Sanjek (1990) by taking 'scratch notes' that I then wrote up into fieldnotes and also memos, designed to remind me of particular points or impressions that I wanted to follow up further. The scratch notes were typically taken out of sight of the participants, as I was keen that they feel comfortable, and be able to relax around me. Consequently I frequently carried a folded A4 sheet in my pocket, with a very small pen. This enabled me to go to the bathroom, or to another quiet area to write down conversations or observations. When this wasn't possible I also used the 'notes app' on my mobile phone to record information. At other times however I was able to write on paper in plain sight, as for example in Church, where several congregants took notes on sermons.

Just as Fechter (2007: 13) experienced while researching expatriates in Jakarta, 'although I occasionally came across acquaintances by chance in shopping malls or restaurants, I usually had to make appointments or attend events in order to spend time with them'. Indeed, while I was able to practice participant observation at churches, the Stephen Centre, the AEP, and the occasional social event that I was invited to, many of

my notes were taken on encounters before, during, and after interviews (see Oberhauser, 1997). Similar to Bornstein (2005a) who found that some of her most insightful material emerged during conversations in cars instead, rather than formal interviews, the time around interviews proved to be particularly interesting. Following an interview in one missionary's home, for example, I was invited to stay for dinner with her and another missionary's family. While peeling the potatoes and talking I was able to gain major insights into the everyday home life of this individual.

Focus Groups

As Conradson (2005: 142) acknowledges, 'focus groups are a method that has seen growing popularity in human geography in recent years'. Indeed, while constructing my research design I considered how they allow for a 'number and diversity of views [to be] collected and contrasted' (Kelly, 2012: 73). Midway through my research I spoke with several missionaries that I had already interviewed to gauge whether they would be interested in taking part in one. Unfortunately however I consistently came up against the issue of time, given their already extensive commitments to ministry and family. The opportunity to carry out three focus groups did however eventually emerge organically, as was the case with the first one I carried out in a town in Southern Albania. I had travelled to stay with two missionary women for a week, and while I was there I met another missionary couple and their family who lived upstairs. They seemed reluctant to be interviewed separately, but invited me to ask them questions as a group. Sat under a flower covered veranda in the house's front garden I recorded an hour long discussion around several of the key questions in my research. This experience was particularly valuable since the participants knew each other very well, and consequently the discussion felt open and relaxed. I was careful not to speak too often, but instead guided the flow of conversation by asking them to expand on certain points, or by posing a different question.

I also undertook two further focus groups at the AEP national conference in Budva in November 2011. I was allocated two one hour slots in the conference programme, and given free reign over what I did. This was in the last month of my research, and consequently I had begun to form some conclusions in my mind about the outcomes of the research. I decided to use the opportunity as a way to disseminate some of these findings, and to give the missionaries a forum in which to provide feedback by challenging, debunking or expanding on what I had discovered. At the start of the conference I was invited on to the main stage to explain my research and to invite the missionaries present to attend one of the focus groups. Bearing in mind that I would be the only 'moderator', and that I would need to be able to record all of the voices of the participants, I had thought carefully about the number of participants to include in each focus group. Following Morgan's (1997:34) 'rule of thumb' I decided that between 6 and 10 would be optimal. Consequently I invited the missionaries to write their names on a sign up sheet that I had placed at the back of the conference hall, with a maximum of ten places on it. In the first session I had eight participants, and in the second I had eleven, since one individual had accidentally missed the focus group that they had signed up to.

Powell and Single (1996: 499) describe focus groups as 'a group of individuals selected and assembled by researchers to discuss and comment on, from personal experience, the topic that is the subject of research'. Consequently, I designed the focus groups to address three of the central themes that had emerged from my research: how to define a missionary; the expectations placed on missionaries; technology and transnational living. At the start of each session I invited the participants to introduce themselves to the rest of the group. Following which I introduced an 'ice breaker' activity based around the question, from your perspective, what should be the job description for a missionary? I had placed sheets of blank paper around the table, and asked the group to move into teams of 2 or 3 to discuss this question against several criteria including, qualifications needed; essential and desirable characteristics; salary and living arrangements; advice for applicants. Each group then fed their thoughts back to the group, and I encouraged the whole group to discuss the ideas. Next, I asked them to

do the same task, but from the perspective of an Albanian, and then a supporter. This was designed to unearth how missionaries felt they were perceived. Again, I brought the groups back together to share and discuss their thoughts. Next I passed round a short article printed from a missionary blog, entitled 'I Can't Call You A Missionary' (Appendix 2), and used this as jump off point for discussion around people's expectations of modern day missionaries. I followed this with a final further article based around the impact of technology on the operationalisation of mission, and missionary life (Appendix 3). As with the life-focused interviews and semi-structured interviews I chose to utilise qualitative content analysis in order to pull out the salient themes. At the same time I was particularly interested in missionaries' exchanges, and noted when there were points of disagreement, or consensus.

Reflexivity

While reflexivity is sometimes misinterpreted as unnecessary 'navel gazing', scholars such as England (1994) have strongly argued for a 'geography in which intersubjectivity and reflexivity play a central role' (see also Pile, 1991; Merrifield, 1995; Thrift, 1996). Reflexivity calls for researchers to be attentive to the ways in which 'past experiences, points of view, and roles impact interactions with and interpretations of the research scene' (Tracy, 2013: 19). It demands that scholars, 'dismantle the smokescreen surrounding the canons of neo-positivist research' (England, 1994; see also Okely, 1992), including impartiality and objectivist neutrality, and acknowledge that 'like it or not...[their] consciousness is always the medium through which the research occurs' (Stanley & Wise, 1993: 157). Further, it challenges researchers to present not only the polished product of their fieldwork, but also the process that lay behind its production. In this section then I take four vignettes from my fieldnotes and reflect on how I am implicated in the research, both in terms of its undertaking and presentation.

My Fieldnote Reflections:

Opening the service the pastor addressed the crowd enthusiastically, yelling in to his microphone, "If you know Jesus Christ you are a brother or sister of God! We are all part of God's family! So let's celebrate!"

My Fieldnote Reflections:

During the course of this research I've felt again and again that the missionary community has a kind of 'fortress mentality'. That I am someone to be fought off, to be suspicious of, to avoid. Even a figure deserving of hostility. But have I done the same thing? Have I gradually become more closed, more guarded, and perhaps even paranoid?

Reflecting on his fieldwork experience with Evangelical Bible study groups in America, Bielo (2009:31) writes that 'establishing one's posture toward Christianity is often the first, and often the most crucial, element of doing ethnography in Christian communities'. Indeed, my attitude towards Christianity, formed in large part by my own spiritual biography, impacted not only my access to, but also experience of, researching missionaries. Growing up I was taken to an Ecumenical church, consisting of a partnership between the Church of England, the United Reformed Church and the Methodist Church. Later when I was a teenager I began attending an Evangelical church, and identified myself as a born again Christian. As the years have passed however I have moved away from this positionality. Rather I would now describe myself as an agnostic, or a former Evangelical. In terms of this research therefore, I was a 'partial insider' (Sherif, 2001), placed in the ambiguous position of understanding the language and beliefs of the Evangelicals with which I was engaging, but without being an Evangelical believer myself.

Sitting amongst rows and rows of believers, as described in the fieldnote extract above, there had been an audible cheer as the pastor shouted, 'If you know Jesus Christ you are a brother or sister of God! We are all part of God's family!'. Yet even though I understood the sentiment, and remembered what it felt like to be able to respond, I was unable to. Indeed, it was moments like this, that crystallised for me an on-going feeling of isolation. In her research with a South Korean Evangelical community Chong (2008: 379) found that there are 'psychological and emotional costs [to] studying an exclusivist community'. I found this resonated during the course of the research, and as I immersed myself further in the lifeworlds of the people I was studying, there were countless moments in which I felt palpably alien or set apart. Every time I introduced myself to a new person, for example, I would inevitably have to mark my card as a 'non-believer'. Meanwhile, even in those relationships that developed into something akin to a friendship, where there was common ground, my identity as a non-Christian frequently came to the fore. Just as with Han (2010b: 12), and her research with short-term Korean Evangelical missionaries therefore, I was 'intensely aware of the physic and ideological distance between me and my participants', and it took an 'emotional toll' on me.

Compounding this sense of being an 'outsider' was the further difficulty that I had in establishing and building relationships with the missionary community. As I mentioned previously, I found that countless emails went unanswered, phone calls and texts ignored, and on occasion I was actually snubbed in person. For some it seemed that I was a pest, a figure of suspicion, and someone best avoided. Over time this sense of both spiritual and social estrangement weighed heavily on both me, and by extension my research. I became increasingly despondent about what I saw as missionaries' 'fortress mentality', and extremely tired of feeling unwelcome. At some points during the research I struggled to leave my flat, and when I did I anticipated with dread who I would meet that day, and what their attitude would be towards my presence in the missionary community. Through the process of keeping detailed fieldnotes however, I realised that I had begun to develop the same 'fortress mentality' that I had identified in my participants. By re-reading my notes I saw how several negative experiences had

led me to retreat from the field. I had become increasingly paranoid about what missionaries thought about me, and entered into the research with an overriding feeling of trepidation. I felt under a large amount of emotional stress, and found myself actually avoiding doing interviews. Meanwhile, when I did muster the emotional energy to step outside of my flat, and to undertake research, I found that I had become more timid in my questioning, doing the very minimum in order to avoid any possibility of alienating myself further. In other words, I had been busy building my own psychological 'fortress mentality'. This, I came to see, was blinding me to the number of missionaries who had (perhaps at their own social expense) shown me kindness. Drawing on this 'emotional knowledge' (Chong, 2008: 385), I found solace in identifying the ways in which participants had advocated on my behalf, and for the research itself. More than this however, recognition of my own experiences created a form of 'emotionally-sensed knowledge' (Hubbard et al., 2001: 119; See also Jansson, 2010; Evans, 2012; Humble, 2012) which helped me to both identify and empathise with a feeling of being scrutinised, as I will explore further in Chapters Six and Seven.

Impression Management

My Fieldnote Reflections:

When I first met Samuel he said, 'I knew that you were here even before I returned from my time back in the UK. I'd heard that there was someone doing research about missionaries and I wasn't even in the country!'.

Samuel's comment is indicative of the effectiveness of the missionary grapevine. On numerous occasions I met people who already had detailed information about me, including that my parents are Christians, and that I have an unhealthy appreciation of chocolate cake. That these kinds of details were being relayed around the community alerted me to the continued importance of 'impression management'. Indeed, according to Shaffir and Stebbins (1991: 29), 'entering the field and cultivating rich relationships are attributable mainly to the researcher's personal attributes and self-

presentation, and to others' judgments of him or her as a human being'. Put another way, Glesne and Peshkin (1999: 58) argue that 'qualitative researchers are like actors; they must be able to 'unself' themselves as they enter the lives of other people. They do not 'become' other people, but they do manage the impressions that they give...managing selves that are instrumental to gaining access and maintaining access throughout the period of study in a way that optimizes the data collection.'

Resonating with these sentiments, during the course of research I frequently felt that I 'donned masks in order to remove the masks of those I wanted to observe' (Peshkin, 1984: 258). Dressing each morning before an interview, for example, I would be careful to select clothes that were more modest than I might usually choose. Meanwhile, I found myself filtering my language, and also how I chose to present certain aspects of my life, including for example, my relationship at the time. Thus while I never lied, I did notice myself censoring anything that might have been frowned upon by my participants. At times this led to a feeling of inauthenticity, but I was anxious not to give any of the missionaries a reason not to want to associate with me. Further, this extended to where in the city I socialised, as I looked to share drinks with friends only in areas where I knew I was unlikely to bump into any participants. On several occasions this led to a feeling of claustrophobia, and a desire to 'rebel' in a similar vein to that described by Bornstein (2005a). In her work with Protestant NGOs in Zimbabwe, she found herself being preached to during an interview. Following this encounter she visited a church bookstore and felt an overwhelming desire to steal something. Trying to explain this urge she suggests, 'perhaps being surrounded by so much 'goodness', I came to embody its opposite: transgression' (Bornstein, 2005a: 36). In other words, Bornstein (2005a: 36) felt smothered by the 'super-good and super-sweet' witnessing that she had experienced, and wanted to run towards its opposite. In my case, I craved going out and drinking one or two glasses too many, and staying out till the early hours of the morning. Unlike Bornstein, who did not in the end steal anything, I did sometimes do this in my own flat, and at times in obscure areas of the city where I was unlikely to be seen. These small acts of defiance felt like a release of pressure, and enabled me to continue the process of effective 'impression management'.

My Fieldnote Reflections:

‘Ever since the day I met you I’ve been thinking about you. God is chasing you. But I’m scared. You have heard so much truth. And I’m just scared, I’m really scared. Because, and I don’t know when it will be, but one day is God is going to send the birds, and they’re going to eat all those seeds that were sewn. I’m not trying to pressurize you, but I feel like I have to say that’.

Methodological accounts of working with Evangelical communities typically focus on issues of access, and are less concerned with exploring the intensity of fieldwork relationships that are formed. During the research I asked a number of personal questions regarding people’s beliefs, and religious praxis. In turn this led to intimate discussions about how participants were ‘saved’, what God means to them, and some of their daily trials and tribulations. At times the questions were reciprocated, as participants asked the same things of me. To a large extent I felt compelled to respond, since to do otherwise would have felt extractive and one-sided. Typically I kept my answers ‘light’, however on a few occasions I found myself moved to share more of myself with participants. Typically these were missionaries that I felt the most rapport with, and with whom I had built up a form of friendship.

The extract I introduced at the start of this section is taken from fieldnotes about a dinner that I shared with a young missionary called William. As the first person that I approached about my research, William had become an important ‘man of peace’, and at times offered me much needed support. I was soon to be leaving Albania, and I asked if I could do one last interview with him. We sat in a restaurant, and for several hours we talked easily, reviewing what I had found over the previous 8 months, and following up with him on things that I wanted to explore further. As the meal came to a close however William took control, and began to share his impressions of me, and my

'spiritual journey'. Symbolising God's truth as seeds, he expressed concern that all the seeds that had been sown in my life might be taken away. While his words were thought provoking, what really moved me was the way he delivered them. He looked visibly upset, his eyes wet. Similarly, another missionary to whom I had become quite close once took my hand and held it tightly. She spoke to me of her admiration for the project, but also of her hopes that I would come to know Jesus Christ through it. I found these experiences very moving, and they have stuck with me, not only during the remaining fieldwork, but also the writing process, and in my own life. While at times distressing, the tears of these participants, shed on my behalf, have been a constant reminder not to 'write away' the palpable existence of God in their lives.

'There, There, Don't Be Afraid Of the Big Bad Wolf': Power and Representation

Nearing the end of my research I received an email from Adam, the main gatekeeper of the AEP, asking to meet with me for a coffee. I had a sense of foreboding, and went to see him a few days later at the new AEP offices. Below are my fieldnotes following our meeting:

Fieldnotes, New AEP Office Wednesday October 12th 2011

Adam offered me coffee and showed me into a side office. He opened conversation by saying that he feels that he was always been straight with me, and so he will continue to do so. Two or three of the executive committee of the AEP are apparently seriously concerned that I will write a sensationalist and negative account of the missionary community. Citing the bad reputation that anthropologists have amongst missionaries, he said that I was basically being tarred with the same brush, and 'that people have been burnt before'. He told me that he felt I had always been very above board, and he appreciated the way that I had handled the research. One of their concerns is that I will take the information that I have gathered, and in his words, put a 'slant on it' that will be highly unfavourable. That perhaps

he had 'flung the doors wide' and allowed access when he shouldn't have....the upshot of all of this was that I have been asked to give a ten minute introduction to each of the focus group sessions at the AEP national conference, outlining my findings thus far. When I asked why, he said that he felt that it would go some way to reassuring people, to soothing their concerns, by giving them some idea of what I would write about. He said, 'it's a bit like there, there dear, don't be afraid of the big bad wolf'. As he said this he patted one hand on the other in a reassuring motion....Later, he finished the conversation with, 'Claire, I trust you'.

Adam's final comment was the most hard-hitting of anything that he said in that meeting. I was aware that he had 'put his neck on the line' by granting me access to the AEP, and that his judgment was now being questioned by his colleagues. Despite us not having spent a large amount of time together, I felt a fondness for Adam, and a sense of responsibility to 'do right by him'. In this encounter Adam was asking me to prove the critics wrong by not writing anything overly critical or 'sensationalist'. In other words, he wanted to influence how I chose to represent the missionaries in this study. In this section then, I reflect on issues of power and representation, and dwell in particular on the dynamics of 'studying up' (see Nader, 1972; Rice, 2010; Gallaher, 2012).

Within writing on the process of research, power has typically been depicted as exercised by the researcher at the expense of the researched. Feminist and post-modernist scholars in particular have written widely on such skewed power relations (see Oakley, 1981; Clifford, 1986; Harding, 1987; Wolf, 1996). Yet during the course of the fieldwork I often felt that participants were able to exercise considerable influence over my research. Indeed, in recent years a handful of scholars have expressed similar sentiment while 'studying up' (Mosse, 2006; Conti & O'Neil, 2007, see Ortner, 2010). This phrase was first coined in 1972 by Nader, who used it to refer to research that focused on the middle and upper end of the social power structure. While such accounts remain 'scarce, sporadic and marginal in academic research, and in qualitative studies in particular' (Aguiar, 2012: 17), the few that have emerged have strongly

underlined how participants can exert influence over the research process (see also Coleman, 2002). For example, in their work with actors involved with the dispute settlement mechanism of the World Trade Organization, Conti and O'Neill (2007) found themselves in a struggle for authority during interviews. Typically participants would insist that they took place in their offices, with the researcher sat on the other side of the desk from them. Time was strictly monitored, and often questions were hijacked to suit their own agenda. Similarly at times I felt that I lost control of interviews, and that I became the interviewee. On one particular occasion I was proselytised to, without reprieve, for over an hour before I could steer the conversation back on topic. Given that my access to missionaries was so problematic I had felt unable to interject earlier, and instead allowed the participant's narrative to run its course.

More significant however was the way in which some participants sought to claim their words as a form of 'intellectual property'. Despite agreeing to partake in the research, interviews would be peppered with comments such as 'don't include that' or 'I don't want that taken out of context of this'. Indeed, the participants seemed to be very keen to exert influence over how I interpreted and presented the information that I gathered (see Mosse, 2006). In the most extreme cases participants requested that should the research be published, they be allowed to read and potentially object to the write up first. In this situation I explained that I would be happy for participants to read over the manuscript and to correct me on any factual errors, but that I reserved the right not to alter my interpretation. At the same time, and returning to the fieldnote excerpt from my meeting with Adam, I also felt a more subtle form of 'emotional pressure'. More specifically, based on the emotional intensity of the relationships that I had formed, and the very personal nature of the information that I gathered, I felt that I would be breaking their trust by producing any form of critical account. At times this caused me to hesitate over the writing of this thesis, thinking about how my interpretation would be received. In addition, I also felt an internal resistance against seeing the 'lives, loves, and tragedies that fieldwork informants share with a researcher [as] ultimately data, grist for the ethnographic mill, a mill that has a truly grinding power' (Stacey, 1988:23). In writing this thesis I have however had to acknowledge that 'in the architecture of the

academy there is an internal relation between researcher and researched in the production of power-knowledge that makes all ethnographic writing, in part, an act of betrayal (Keith 1992: 554). At the same time, and as I discussed in the previous section, I have sought to be faithful to the reality of God in participants' lives by both examining missionaries' religious beliefs and praxis in and of themselves, while also discussing what such understanding brings to wider academic debates around the relationship between religion and migration, geopolitics, transnationalism and the home.

Concluding Remarks

In this chapter I have presented the methodological approach that I adopted for this study, and discussed the different stages that were involved in the research process. In doing so I have made several contributions to wider research methodology, particularly with regard to research around 'closed' communities. First, I introduced the religious concept of 'man of peace', and showed how it successfully combines ideas around the more commonly used term 'gatekeeper', as well a more holistic understanding of how such individuals can become sources of continued support beyond the initial granting of access. Second, I fleshed out the use of what Ortner (2013: 213) terms 'interface ethnography', and discussed its salience for studying 'closed' communities. Third, I have reflected on my own positionality within the research, and underlined key issues for researchers studying absolutist groups, including *Developing a Fortress Mentality*, *Impression Management* and *Spiritual Vulnerability*. Finally I have added empirical strength to the call for more nuanced examinations of the struggles over power and representation between researcher and researched. This chapter has thus set the scene for the following thesis with regard to how the research was carried out and with whom. In the following chapter I build on this, fleshing out the participants' profiles as part of an examination of the initial stages of Evangelical missionaries' migration trajectories, wherein the decision is made to undertake 'migration with a mission'.

CHAPTER 4

Following 'The Call'

Evelyn's Story

Evelyn was a young girl when her Father died, and her mother brought her back from Japan to live in London. Following school she went on to study History at the University of Edinburgh, and as her career developed she became immersed in the world of banking and stockbroking. Living in her own flat in Earls Court, Evelyn enjoyed an affluent lifestyle, complete with a red sports car. But one day in her twenties her life was radically altered when she underwent a 'Damascus road experience'²⁴, which saw her accept Jesus Christ as her Lord and Saviour. Evelyn and I first met in Albania at the British Embassy's party for the royal wedding of Kate and William on 29th April 2011. Enigmatic, with a flamboyant dress sense and enthusiastically waving a union jack, she invited me back to her home to share chocolate cake and to continue the festivities. It was on our second occasion of meeting, however, that Evelyn shared with me her journey from the flat she owned in Earls Court to the modest rose covered house in Tirana's old town where we sat together, enjoying the mid-day sun on her roof terrace.

Evelyn explained to me, 'A year after the road to Damascus meeting, a very risen Jesus who healed me of four years of M.E straight away, spoke to me. I heard an audible voice saying, 'go to YWAM'²⁵...I thought YWAM would be a Chinese man or a Chinese restaurant or something! And as always, when God says things he provides the answers almost immediately, so I

²⁴ This phrase references Paul's journey to Damascus, which was interrupted by a blinding and the voice of God, as discussed both in Paul's own letters and the Acts of the Apostles.

²⁵ YWAM stands for Youth With A Mission. It is 'an international Christian Charity dedicated to making God known through training, communication and care based ministries'. See <http://www.ywam.org> [Accessed 11th October 2008]

then found out that YWAM was an organization, and within an hour my flat was sold, having been on the market for two years and three months. Nobody had seen it, and half an hour later it was sold. And I was heading up to do a Discipleship Training School (DTS) aged thirty!'. Having finished her Discipleship Training Evelyn took a position with the organization in Edinburgh, during which time she holidayed in Greece and spent one day exploring Saranda, in the south of Albania. Upon returning home she was asked if she would take a team to Albania, which was now fully accessible. Visibly shrinking into the bench she told me, 'well, I thought I'll lie low, I'll hide and pretend that I didn't get the letter.' But YWAM caught up with Evelyn, and she eventually took a team to Albania on a short-term mission trip, despite misgivings. Evelyn's face brightened and her lips twitched into a smile as she went on to recount to me, 'I then got back and I knew something was happening in my heart, but I didn't know what. I just sat alone in a friend's empty house in Edinburgh and in the end I said, 'OK, I think you're calling me'. In October 1992 Evelyn felt God confirm this call when He answered her prayer to meet and talk with three key figures in her life who did not reside in Scotland. And so, at the age of 35, Evelyn 'laid down everything' and decided to go. Now living on three times less money than she earned 22 years previously, Evelyn has been a missionary to Albania for 18 years, and is married to an Albanian Christian, with two young daughters.

In the extract above we are afforded a window onto the process behind Evelyn's decision to leave her life as an affluent stockbroker, and move to Albania as a long-term missionary. While to an extent dramatic, her decision to 'lay down everything' was by no means unique. Instead, Evelyn's was just one of 53 life-focused interviews that I collected during my fieldwork, each tracing their own personal trajectories towards Albania. Across the participants there was a large variety of national and ethnic backgrounds. In addition, I found an extraordinary variation in class backgrounds, with previous occupations that ranged from stockbrokers, lawyers, doctors, cleaners, and

carpenters to burger flippers. In thinking through their decision-making process, and by taking their religious identities seriously, it quickly became apparent therefore that the normative economic models often used in migration theory held little explanatory value for this mixed group of individuals' decision to migrate. Rather, what united their trajectories was not an economic imperative, but a religious one.

At the same time, while the idea that 'religion is rooted in irrationality' (see Stark & Finke, 2000: 32) has been widespread, I became interested in how 'rationality' has been used in migration theory, and to what extent it could be applied to the missionaries in this study. In doing so, I found that first, rationality has had a decidedly materialist nature, or put another way, only that which is materially verifiable has been considered reasonable. And second, that within migration theory rationality has typically been confined to an economic outlook, using the language of cost-benefit or cost-reward. According to this framework therefore, missionaries' decision to migrate based on their religious beliefs appeared 'irrational'. Yet, following the American sociologist James S. Coleman (1990, cited in Stark & Finke, 2000: 37) who wrote, 'much of what is ordinarily described as nonrational or irrational is merely so because observers have not discovered the point of view of the actor, from which the action is rational', I encountered participants who insisted that the reasons behind their decision to migrate were, according to their own logic, rational. Indeed, building on insights from Ager and Ager (2011: 466), who argue that 'religion is not irrational...it simply does not consider pure reason (that is reason uninformed by faith) to be the ultimate arbiter of truth', this chapter begins at the start of an Evangelical missionaries' migration trajectory, and examines the reasons why missionaries decide to migrate. In doing so it develops a 'religious rationale' for movement, and contributes not only to broadening the notion of rationality beyond the economic purview, but also to addressing a current lack of research that employs the 'theological frameworks of religious migrant practitioners themselves' (Tse, 2012: NP)²⁶.

²⁶<http://jkhtse.wordpress.com/2012/10/16/homo-religiosus-religion-and-immigrant-subjectivities-co-authored-with-david-ley-in-religion-and-place-landscape-politics-piety-eds-peter-hopkins-lily-kong-and-elizabeth-olson/> [Accessed 12th January 2013]

To build my argument I begin in Section One by briefly outlining the prominence of 'rational economic actors' (*homo economicus*) (Samers, 2010: 111) in migration theory, before turning to signpost wider calls for further recognition of the cultural context of migration. At the same time, I introduce the reader to debates in sociology around religion and rational choice, and argue that while proponents have looked to demonstrate that religious behaviour (such as conversion) is rational, their focus on cost-benefit/rewards has remained within an economic framework and failed to resonate with believers themselves. In view of which, and informed by key moments in the fieldwork, in Section Two I introduce the concept of 'the call', and signpost its significance for understanding missionaries' decision to migrate. Next, in Section Three I examine the reasons why missionaries decide to answer this 'call', and in doing so I argue for the importance of recognising world-views that are not founded in economic rationality, but rather values of religious obedience, duty and love. Extending this analysis, Section Four foreshadows the next chapter's focus, and highlights two instances in which participants decided upon Albania as their mission destination, despite knowing very little about the country. Finally, in Section Five I sum up the findings of the chapter, recognising in particular the need to give voice to alternative rationalities within migration research.

Migration, Rationality and the Missionary

'Honestly, to anyone that's not a Christian, we look like we're insane, to be completely honest. I mean, what normal sane person would want to give up a life that others would think is a luxury. Being able to make as much money as you wanted, doing whatever you wanted, to come to some country that's poor, you know, where there's no steady electricity, you can't drink water out of the faucet, it's not as comfortable as in the US. Yeah, so everyone thinks we're insane. But I guess it has to do with, from a Christian's perspective, you know, faith, and a different idea of what's important'.

Abbie had only been in Albania for a few weeks when I first met her, and as we talked over cheeseburgers and milkshakes in the Stephen Centre, she expressed concern that she would have little of worth to contribute to the research. Yet her remark was to prove particularly insightful, and forms the foundation of this chapter's main argument: that missionary migration is motivated by a 'religious rationale'. To unpack this further this section discusses the relationship between rationality and migration, and signposts calls for further recognition of the cultural context of migration. At the same time, I highlight attempts from within sociology to combat claims of religion's inherent 'irrationality'. While recognising critiques of this approach, I uphold the contention that religiously motivated decisions can be understood as rational, and in doing so provide the backdrop for Section Three.

The question of rationality has been at the heart of migration theories since its inception. Developed in the context of labour migration, micro-level decision-making models such as neoclassical theory (Todaro, 1976), and 'the new economics of migration' (Stark & Bloom, 1985; Taylor 1986) have placed 'rational economic actors' (*homo economicus*) (Samers, 2010: 111) at their centre. Indeed, 'in the majority of studies of migration - whether from a neoclassical or a Marxian perspective - it has been (and still is) the economic aspect that has been emphasised most strongly' (Halfacree, 2004: 242; see also King et al., 2000: ix). Rational choices have therefore been popularly conceptualised as operating within a framework of economic cost-benefit calculations and profit/maximisation, whether this be at the scale of the individual, family or household. Typically therefore, the migrant has traditionally been represented as in search of personal advancement. Yet Abbie's comment, included at the start of this section, was indicative of a wider sentiment amongst the participants. Namely, that they had not moved to Albania for economic gain, and were instead actually accepting large pay cuts and in some cases undergoing a process of de-skilling. According to migration theories wherein rationality has typically been considered within the framework of economics (Hagan & Ebaugh, 2003; Halfacree, 2004; Hagan, 2012) therefore, these individuals' decisions to migrate might therefore appear wholly irrational. Monetarily, there is no positive net return, and not even any

anticipation of one. Further, while alternative theories, such as the 'behaviouralist approach', advocated for a more nuanced investigation of cognition and decision-making than that afforded by the more traditional theories aforementioned, Samers (2010) makes the point that within this conception 'migrants are satisficers (seeking satisfaction), rather than maximizers (seeking optimization)'. More specifically, Wolpert (1965), one of the key scholars working in this area, argued that migrants move when they have reached a threshold of 'stress' (or discomfort) in the country of emigration. In other words, they are impelled to move in pursuit of more satisfying conditions. Yet the missionaries in this study complicate these approaches, since in contrast they expected their standards of living to decrease, and at times for life to be more difficult, physically, emotionally and spiritually. Indeed, Abbie herself outlined how she could understand why her decision to move to Albania might look 'insane' to an outside observer, going against 'one of the age of truisms of migration...that people will always want to migrate to better themselves and seek improved livelihoods for their family' (King, 2012: 148). And yet, both she and the other foreign missionaries whom I spoke to had taken this decision.

On another occasion, Kenneth, a 50 something from New Jersey, sat with me in a French styled Café and tried to explain why he had first considered making the move to Albania. Our conversation turned to the question of what can be called rational, and he seemed almost exasperated, as he told me in an animated voice,

'But I'm trying to say it's more rational to do it, than not to do it. And I think sometimes people look at comfort and think that comfort, well, it's rational that I'd want to be able to go and find a home and for me, in warm weather where the sun is always out, where you can put your feet out on the sand. And that would be the rational decision. But I think we're meant to be challenged a little bit more than that, you know?'

Having always dreamt of retiring in the Mediterranean it was somewhat of an 'in joke' with Kenneth that God had played a trick on him by bringing Albania to his attention. It

had not been quite what he had in mind. And yet Kenneth was in the process of acclimatising friends and family to the fact that he would be leaving them, while making two week trips every two months in order to build up contacts and learn more about the country he would eventually be moving to with his wife. Just as with Abbie, what Kenneth clearly alluded to was a different set of priorities, a different world-view by which he judged what was a rational decision. Rather than valuing the maximisation of 'comfort', 'money', or access to utilities such as water or electricity, both of these participants made reference to 'a different idea of what's important' (Abbie).

Yet despite the significance of these participants' sentiments, it is only in recent years that the importance of migrants' world-views have begun to be recognised by academics interested in the 'why' behind migration. Indeed, following a so-called 'cultural turn' within human geography, scholars have become gradually more attuned to how 'individual decisions are rooted in the social practices and cultural beliefs of a population' (Cohen & Sirkeci, 2011: ix). Tony Fielding (1992) in particular is widely accredited as kick-starting this shift (King, 2012), writing in Volume One of the seminal *Migration Processes and Patterns* series (1992: 201) that:

'There is something strange about the way we study migration. We know, often from personal experience, but also from family talk, that moving from one place to another is nearly always a *major event*. It is one of those events around which an individual's biography is built. The feelings associated with migration are usually complicated, the decision to migrate is typically difficult to make, and the outcome usually involves mixed emotions...Migration tends to expose one's personality, it expresses one's loyalties and reveals one's values and attachments (often previously hidden). It is a statement of an individual's world-view, and is, therefore, an extremely *cultural event*.'

This emphasis on unravelling one's 'values' and 'attachments' is now increasingly being built upon within migration studies, in particular by scholars interested in how emotions

such as love and affection are relevant to migration decision-making (Mai & King, 2009). Writing on the 'emotional turn' in the social sciences, and migration studies in particular, (Anderson & Smith, 2001: 7) clearly demonstrate how emotional relations have been:

'regarded as something apart from the economic or the geographic, as something essentially private removed from the researcher's gaze traditionally fixed on spatial mobility patterns, pull-push factors, the 'laws' of migration, the mobility transition, assimilation/integration and cross-cultural encounter.'

In the same way, religious world-views have also been considered something private, and as a result they have only recently (as discussed in Chapter Two) been considered within migration research. Despite progress however, 'the role of religion...especially in decision-making and the journey, has been generally overlooked by social scientists and policy makers alike' (Hagan & Ebaugh, 2003: 1145). Indeed, Even Myers (2000: 55), who advocates for research that examines 'how migration is responsive to individual religion', confines her analysis to the role of participants' involvement in local religious institutions, asking whether regular attendance affects the likelihood of migration. Yet as Hagan (2012) demonstrates in her fieldwork with a transnational Maya community originating from the western highlands of Guatemala, some migrants consult God as an intrinsic part of their decision to migrate. For example, *ayunos*, which are fasting and informal prayer services, are held for potential migrants to attend. Here Pentecostal pastors, who are believed to be able to hear the will of God for other people, prophesise over the attendees. As Hagan & Ebaugh (2003: 1146) underline, 'for some, the pastor's prophecies at these *ayunos* constitute the final decision to migrate'. Moreover, in the case of my participants, God is not just consulted over the decision, but rather His will is the primary catalyst for their migration. The role of religion in the decision-making process, which constitutes the focus of this chapter, therefore remains a key area for research within the broader context of calls for recognition of the 'cultures of migration'.

Meanwhile, around the same time that geographers began examining the 'cultures of migration' (see Hahn & Klute, 2007; Cohen & Sirkeci, 2011), the application of rational choice theory to religion became the focus of increasing attention in sociology. More specifically, key thinkers including Iannaccone (1995) and Stark and Finke (2000) sought to 'explain religion in terms of rational decision-making, especially as employed in economic thinking' (Alles, 2010: 50). In the seminal text *Acts of Faith: Explaining the Human Side of Religion* Stark and Finke (2000: 56) write for example, 'what we are saying is that religious behaviour - to the degree that it occurs - is generally based on cost/benefit calculations and is therefore rational behaviour in precisely the same sense that other human behaviour is rational'. Yet while scholars have applauded the attempt to counter the representation of religion as irrational, there has also been concern that there is a 'telling incongruity between the reductive economic model on offer and the specific multiplex reality it seeks to explain' (Bruce, 1993: 200). More specifically, Bankston (2002: 333) argues that 'numerous believers...would be disturbed by the suggestion that their beliefs are determined solely by the perceived chances of rewards'. Indeed, as the following sections will demonstrate, missionaries in Albania did not place emphasis on self-interest, and what they themselves could gain, but rather spoke in terms of operating out of obedience, the duty to save souls, and a love of God. This is not to say that their reasons are not rational however, rather they are rooted in a non-economic rationality.

In the following sections then, I examine the world-view of the participants and in the process unravel their 'values' and 'attachments', and how they relate to the initial stages of the migration trajectory, wherein the decision to migrate is made. In turn I reveal a 'religious rationale' behind their movement, which makes the decision to move more intelligible. Key to this is the concept of 'the call'. Evoked by all but 7 of the 53 participants from whom I collected a life-focused interview, it was frequently used as an initial starting point from which to explain their decision to become a 'cross-cultural' missionary. The concept of the 'call' has a long history in Christian theology, and is intimately linked to what is widely known as 'The Great Commandment', issued by Jesus in the Bible. In Section Two then, I begin by first examining its historical legacy,

before using the empirical material to introduce the reader to the multitude of ways in which the believer 'hears' the call to mission work abroad.

'The Call'

With each life-focused interview that I listened to I gained an ever-increasing awareness of the centrality of 'the call' to participants' decision to migrate to Albania. 'The call' has been a prominent concept for centuries within Christianity, and in a number of cases formed the bedrock of participants' motivation to become 'cross-cultural' missionaries. 'The call' refers to the belief that individuals can be called by God to undertake missionary work abroad. Its roots can be found in the Bible, although across the centuries, and particularly during the 19th century, stories of 'the call' were seen to take on more stylized forms. The most celebrated of these centered on a dramatic moment, whereby some sort of epiphany the Great Fathers of mission heard the voice of God telling them to go and reach lost souls in Africa, China or India for Christ. Indeed, countless books such as W.J Lhamon's *Heroes of Modern Mission* (2010) or Milton's *Christian Missionaries* (1995), alongside missionary biographies, are devoted to their re-telling.

The words 'call' (*kletoi*), and 'called' or 'chosen' (*elektoi*), can be found throughout the Old and New Testament, relaying a number of connected meanings. For example, the Bible speaks of a call to salvation (see II Timothy 1:8-9), calls to serve the Lord, and calls to some specific service. In my research, 'the call' was typically evoked in connection with the words of a resurrected Jesus. As each of the Gospels and the Book of Acts describes, after Jesus had been put to death on the cross and then raised from the dead, he appeared before the disciples to give them instructions about what to do after he left them to go to the Father. The writings of Matthew were evoked the most frequently by the missionaries, as found in the Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 28, Verses 18 to 20:

'Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Across history this command has been understood in a number of different ways. Fierce debate has ensued about whether it is a general command that all Christians should obey, or if it only applies to those who feel that they have received a personal call from God to go to the mission field. Across history several attitudes can be discerned, one of which came across clearly in one missionary's sentiment that:

' i f

we look at this Great Commission, it's basically a command. And so the question in our minds should be, not *if* I'm going to do it, but *how* I'm going to do it. Because we're *all* commanded to be somehow engaged with the world' (Patrick).

Indeed, the idea that every committed Christian is called to mission work can be found in the writings of several key mission figures including Jim Elliott and Robert Speer (1923: 16), who insist that 'you and I need no special call to apply that general call to our lives. We do need a special call to exempt us from its application to our lives'. On the other hand however, as Sills (2008) underlines, there are also those who have emphasized the danger of the missionary life, and insisted that every Christian should stay at home unless specifically called upon by God.

Occupying a more middle ground, the majority of the participants in this study agreed with Patrick that all Christians should be involved in mission work, but added a clarification about the nature of their involvement. One missionary called William shared with me, for example, that:

'Growing up in the church that I grew up at, I knew that there were only two acceptable options for any good Christian: be a missionary, or support missionaries and be involved in the local church. Those are the only two options. The missionary call is all over the Bible'.

Indeed, in one of the key contemporary, devotional books on the missionary call, Sills (2008: 30) writes,

'some of us are senders and some of us are goers. Neither is more important than the other. Neither is possible without the other. The lost cannot be born again without the Gospel, and missionaries cannot go preach unless we send them. We all have a role to play in international missions. That means we all have a missionary call of some sort. Gospel. What's yours?'

While I expand further in Chapter Six on 'the senders', 'the goers' in this project typically spoke not only of an awareness of the general call for Christians to be engaged in mission work (whether at home or abroad), but also of a more specific moment, or a growing sense, that they were being called upon to actually become missionaries and 'go out'. Similarly, in his study of Evangelical missionaries living in a compound in Ecuador, Swanson (1995:66) found that of his 129 participants, 73 per cent reported that they had felt a general call to missions, while a further 55 percent went on to attest to a memory of a particular time or place wherein they had had a special 'call' experience. It is clear therefore that, 'Evangelicals continue to base their key motivation for long-term commitment to foreign missions [on] the notion of an individualized divine call to spread the Gospel of Christ throughout the world' (Swanson, 1995: 66).

Across the life-focused interviews there were a large variety of ways in which the participants explained how they experienced, or heard, 'the call' to become missionaries. Indeed, in asking how ordinary individuals feel a pull towards undertaking

missionary work abroad, it became apparent that, in the words of one participant, 'we're not dealing with a cookie cutter God, he doesn't ever call anyone the exact same way twice'. Yet while no two recountings of 'the call' were the same, several themes did emerge. It was rare for example that anyone recounted a 'bolt out of the blue' type call, as experienced by the apostle Paul on the road to Damascus. Recorded in Acts 26: 13-18, Paul explains that,

'About noon...as I was on the road, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, blazing around me and my companions. ¹⁴ We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.'

¹⁵ "Then I asked, 'Who are you, Lord?'

'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,' the Lord replied. ¹⁶ 'Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen and will see of me. ¹⁷ I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them ¹⁸ to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'

In contrast to this dramatic encounter with God, the majority of participants explicated a growing interest in missionary work, catalysed by their family or church upbringing; experiences at a missions conference or concert; or the impact of a short-term mission trip abroad. Drawing on vignettes and snippets of missionaries' life-focused interviews therefore, I continue by mapping out some of the mechanisms, or relationships, by which the participants first described feeling drawn to becoming a missionary, beginning with family and church upbringing.

In her study of 327 missionaries in Papua before the First World War, Langmore (1989:32) found that, 'future missionaries grew up in homes that were permeated with

religion'. Similarly, I discovered that of the 53 participants that I conducted a life-focused interview with, twelve regarded their family members' involvement in mission as having had a significant impact on them. Indeed, the effects of growing up in an environment where it was the norm to be surrounded by stories of missionary life, and actual missionaries returned from the field, were identified as key to sparking their interest in becoming a missionary themselves. Naomi for example is in her mid twenties and spoke of the profound influence that her grandparents have had on her life. They were missionaries to Africa, and as she told me tales of her childhood interactions with them her face would break into a smile. Her memories of home are characterized by brimming boxes of balls, cases of bandages, and other random oddments that seemed to spill out of every cupboard, awaiting shipment to people in Africa where her grandparents worked. Upon their death Naomi learnt of the love and esteem in which several Kenyan families had held her grandparents, and chuckled at their decision to name their newborns Bill and Moll after them, 'so now there are lots of little African Bills and Molls running around in Kenya. Just because they loved them so much, and they left such a legacy in how they just poured out their lives for them. So that they would have salvation in Jesus'. Through the example of her grandparents therefore, Naomi felt the initial pull towards missionary life, which she conceptualised as the start of a call from God.

Courtney's Uncle, meanwhile, was a missionary to South America, and was taken hostage and later murdered because of his faith. While only three when it happened, she identified this single event as having influenced her entire life and world-view. She explained to me, 'it's like this constant reminder in my mind that God gave his son, Christ, to die for me, to give me freedom and a chance to live and not be totally destroyed by death because of my sin. And my Uncle was willing to give his life for that. I mean, what am I willing to do?'. And in a similar vein, Katherine spoke of the importance of her upbringing in South America as the daughter of missionaries to a jungle tribe,

‘Where we were was very primitive, the typical National Geographic kind of thing, so that’s where I grew up. And so I grew up with a good example of what it meant to give up the worldly pleasures kind of thing, maybe the easier things in life, for a cause that’s greater than just our personal desires. And so I think with that kind of parentage, it was kind of, I couldn’t get away from doing something different like this with my life’.

The work of her close family and her exposure to it, meant therefore that for Katherine, the decision to become a missionary almost felt like a foregone conclusion.

Besides the direct influence of family members, several participants also stressed the role that the church had played in encouraging missionary aspirations. Now a well-respected doctor in Tirana, Brian had grown up watching missionary presentations at his local Evangelical church. Their vibrancy excited him, as did hearing news of what God was doing beyond the confines of his own farming community. He would gaze at a large world map strung up at the front of the church and wonder at the work of the missionaries that his church had sent out, marked on each country. And when missionaries returned they would be welcomed into his home by his parents. All this culminated in a ‘exposure to a world that’s bigger and more open than the farming country that I grew up in. And with that I’ve been exposed to a message that God cares about the whole world’. Indeed, the influence of church life and visiting missionaries were common themes across the participants’ life-focused interviews. Moreover, several participants recounted being challenged by members of their congregation to consider missionary life abroad. This was conceptualised as a divine intervention by God, whereby another Christian was being used to reveal God’s calling upon their life. The church’s culture of encouraging missionary work was therefore seen as a key vehicle through which some of the participants’ callings were nurtured.

In addition, missions conferences have come to form a key mechanism in the recruitment of missionaries. The most famous of these is The Urbana Conference,

named after the location of meetings that started in 1946 between InterVarsity Fellowship, Christian colleges, and prominent missiologists. Largely directed at students, it meets every three years with the express intention of encouraging Christians into foreign mission work, and connecting them with mission agencies showcasing their projects. In the case of the participants in this study, local church based mission meetings, prayer festivals, and concerts, also provided the context for their growing sense of calling. Lydia for instance had not grown up wanting to be a missionary, and instead recounted joking through high school that she didn't want to be made to 'live in a hut'. But 'God has a good sense of humour' she told me, because at a conference in Florida that was organized by her home church, she felt God call her to become one. Alongside her husband she had felt a desire to become more 'pro-active' in her faith, and chose to attend their church's mission conference faithfully, every night for one week. As she recounted a particular evening wherein they 'both felt, separately, that God was calling [them] into missions', Lydia playfully quipped, 'I've always said that missionary conferences are a dangerous place to be! For following this meeting they began praying for an opportunity to go abroad, and are now themselves living in Albania. In a similar vein, Lindsey and Jason, a missionary couple hailing from San Francisco, identified their attendance at a missionary conference in 1996 as when they 'really felt burdened for missions', and set about discerning where they should go. Meanwhile, it was at a memorial concert for Keith Green, an American Gospel singer, that Sabrina and Ryan learnt more 'about the call to the nations, and...really felt at that time that we were called to go to the nations'.

Further, and informed by the life-focused interviews that I collected, it became clear that the undertaking of short-term mission trips had a profound impact on the participants. In fact, in 49 of the 53 life-focused interviews I collected, people reported having taken a short-term mission trip prior to their decision to become a long-term missionary. Of these several explained that it was this exposure to sharing the Gospel in another culture that led them to think about becoming a full-time missionary. In the case of Felicity, her first ever short-term mission experience was in Albania. Coming from an Orthodox Jewish family she had been 'born again' as an Evangelical Christian

while a student, and explained to me, 'once I knew the truth, I was like everyone should know, you know? So I really wanted to go on a mission trip. I thought, 'this is what you do!'. While in Albania she 'felt a really strong calling to move' there, but initially put it down to it being her first experience on the field. Yet after further mission trips to Uganda and Kenya with a women's ministry, she felt that she could no longer deny that 'Albania was still on [her] heart'. Similarly, when Tristan came to Albania as a 21 year old he had intended to stay for just one summer, working in an orphanage. Sat with me in a Tirana coffee shop 20 years later, he explained that after leaving, 'I couldn't get Albania off my mind and heart. Being from a young boy very sensitive to the needs of the world to hear this great message, I had given God my life to be used in this way. There was a growing sense of calling'.

Following the Call

Having discussed how missionaries hear the call, in this section I more squarely consider the rationales shaping missionaries' migration, and in particular the reasons that participants decided to answer this 'call'. Indeed, for some it was not simply a case of immediately undergoing preparation for 'the field'. Instead many underwent a period of inner grappling, and coming to terms with what they believed was being asked of them. In her 1989 study Langmore (1989:44) found that the top three confessed motives for becoming an overseas missionary were, wanting to be obedient to God's commands; the needs of 'the lost'; and the desire to achieve spiritual growth. It is interesting to note that the first two of these were also common themes in this study, although the last of these was less frequently mentioned. Rather, spiritual growth has been identified as important to individuals engaging in short-term mission (see Tuttle, 1998; Beers, 2001; DeTemple, 2006; Hopkins et al, 2010; Baillie Smith et al., 2013). In this section then I map out some of the most commonly declared reasons for accepting 'the call' of God to missionary life overseas, and in doing so outline the 'religious rationale' underlying missionaries' decision-making.

One of the key concepts that the participants returned to time and time again was that of obedience. According to the dictionary definition, obedience is 'compliance with an order, request, or law or submission to another's authority'²⁷. Adding nuance to this however, William, a teacher at a missionary run school in Tirana, spoke about obedience being motivated by love:

'in the Gospel of John, Jesus says, 'if you love me, you will obey my commands.' And so, this is just a working out of, if I love God, I will do what God says. Sometimes it's a very emotional thing, but I'm a pretty linear kind of guy. I'm not here just because I feel like it'.

Indeed, the notion that Christians should obey God, whether this be through following His words in the Bible, or by responding to the direction that they feel they receive from Him, was foundational to many missionaries' decision to migrate. In the case of Sabrina, a married missionary from the US, the decision to obey God's call to overseas mission work was not an easy one. Instead, she struggled with the desire to stay at home and felt overwhelmed by the prospect of her life so radically changing. One might wonder why I found her then, twelve years later, on the mission field in Albania. Indeed, was she there under duress? Yet during our meeting in a beach side café she shared with me,

'I have come to a point where I've decided that God is a better manager of my life and it would just be so much simpler if I say, if I just let Him have control. I can make my own plans but then they can be disappointing. But if I follow, listen to the Lord, and follow His plans for my life, I'll be happier, I'll have peace. I'll be in the centre of His will, and I've learnt that's the best place to be. No matter where you are, being in the centre of His will.'

²⁷ See <http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/obedience?q=obedience> [Accessed 28th February 2012]

Several participants, just like Sabrina, spoke of how they were sure that God had a plan for lives. And believing that He knows them even better than they know themselves, they had decided to follow His direction despite initial misgivings. This sentiment was reflected in the frequency with which I was directed to Jeremiah 29:11-13,

‘For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. ¹² Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. ¹³ You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.’

It was with a trusting heart therefore that these missionaries decided to obey ‘The Great Commandment’, which they felt had been made personal to them through a sense of calling from God.

The Duty to Save ‘Lost’ Souls

In this section I consider the concept of the ‘lost’ within Christianity, and its salience for missionaries’ work. Concern for those who had not accepted Jesus Christ as their saviour was at the very core of the majority of missionaries’ impetus for moving to Albania. Emma’s sentiments conveyed this in a particularly stark manner, ‘if you’re not a Christian then when you die you’re going to go to Hell, and I don’t want you to go to Hell. And Christ died to save people from that, and that’s, well, that’s our mission. All Christians’ mission needs to be to share that with people’. Whether it be using the imagery of a broken bridge ahead, or a child playing on train tracks as a train approaches, there was a sense of huge responsibility that they should warn others of their destinies if they did not ‘receive’ Christ.

Between the 1940s to the 1980s Van Engen (1990:204) noted that ‘as North Americans experienced new sociocultural strength and confidence, changes in the ecumenical theology of mission, and developments in Evangelical partner churches in the third

world, they responded with a broadening of an Evangelical theology of mission that became less reactionary and more holistic'. In other words mission work became less focused on saving people's souls than taking care of their welfare in this world. This was echoed in Langmore's study (1989) that identified a shift in missionaries' language between 'perishing' and 'suffering' unbelievers. While this change in emphasis, 'from the wrath of God to the Fatherhood of God, from Atonement to Incarnation... to a more socially oriented Gospel' (Langmore, 1989: 42) could be discerned in the work of the participants in this research, a preoccupation with damnation continued however to be an overriding theme. Indeed, for the missionaries in this study, Simmons' (1998:129) sentiment that 'salvation is not just *at the heart of mission*, salvation is *the heart of mission*' was particularly pertinent.

For example, Dominic and Kate are the leaders of a prominent Bible School in Tirana that aims to equip new Albanian Christian leaders and missionaries. During an interview at the Stephen Centre the importance of the afterlife to their decision to move to Albania became abundantly clear, as Kate shared with me,

'We wouldn't do this if there wasn't an eternal aspect involved. If we didn't believe that there's a Heaven, there's a Hell, there's life on earth, and there's life after death. And it's either Heaven or Hell, based on your relationship with Jesus. If there weren't an eternal aspect to it our motivation would be much less'.

In this respect therefore missionary movement was propelled not by a desire for one's own advancement or betterment, but out of duty and for the benefit of others. Whether it be describing themselves as having, as one participant told me, 'something like the cure for Aids...only bigger', or a foreknowledge of non-believers' fates should they 'remain on the train tracks', these individuals believed with absolute conviction that they have mortally important information to share. This dual emphasis on duty, and to a degree altruism, is little discussed within migration literature. Meanwhile, within the context of a growing body of literature around volunteering (Simpson, 2006; Baillie

Smith & Laurie, 2011) some studies have acknowledged the role of 'good intentions' (Simpson, 2004: 90) in international volunteering. At the same time however there has also been a strong emphasis on its professionalisation, and in turn the personal benefits that individuals reap from volunteering. Writing on students' volunteering experiences, for example, Yarwood (2005) argued that 'students did not appear to be this altruistic in their motives. The main reason that students volunteered...was 'to gain experience' or, more bluntly, 'to have something to put on their CV'. Missionaries' intermingling of duty, as well as apparently pure altruism, represent therefore an unusual form of 'volunteering'.

For the Love of God

Having received salvation themselves, the desire to thank God for His 'mercy' and 'love' presented itself strongly amongst the participants. For example, Tristan, who is now seen as somewhat of a 'poster child' for missionary work in Albania, has recently been the focus of a documentary about the progress of the Gospel in the country. During an interview with the presenter of the programme, he answered a question as to why he had decided to become a missionary with the following response,

'Because Jesus is worth it, I mean He is the Author and Finisher of our faith. And I love Him, because He first loved me...when He saved me He gave me a reason for living, He gave me everything. I was just a little guy but it was real. And if you love him you want to talk about Him. If you do missions out of duty, that's OK, because it is a duty, I mean, I am a debtor. But it can be so much deeper than that, it ought to be deeper than that. If all we had was a command, go, which we do, we have it, it's a command, go, do it, OK, we do it [pauses]. But when you know Christ, when you love Christ, you don't do it because He told me to do it, OK [reluctant tone], I've got to do it. But you love to tell the story, like the song goes. And it's a desire and it's a delight.'

The desire to show gratitude to God for their salvation was consistently mentioned by the participants of this study. They wanted to use their bodies, and ultimately their lives, in the service of God's will. This was exemplified by a reoccurring motif of 'the living dead'. In Romans 12:1 Paul beseeches believers to 'present your bodies as a living sacrifice'. As Emma explained to me, 'when you become a Christian you're meant to give up everything. I mean, you're supposed to be a living sacrifice. And to be a living sacrifice means that you're dying, right? Like everything in your life is now dead, and you have a new life. Your new life is in Christ, so you're living for Christ'. In other words, the participants in this study found joy in doing something that they believed was directed by God.

In this section then, I have identified three of the key reasons mentioned by missionaries as spurring them on to accept 'the call' to missions. These are first, the desire to be obedient to God; second, the need to save 'lost' souls; and third, wanting to act out of love for God. These are, I argue, the building blocks of a 'religious rationale' rooted in a biblical world-view. While they might not appear rational within an economic purview, for these missionaries and their 'idea of what is important' (Abbie), the decision to become a missionary and follow God is entirely rational. Building on which (and foreshadowing Chapter Five's focus on Albania as mission destination) in the following section I introduce two participants' stories about their sense of specific calling to Albania, and their subsequent commitment to migrate. While they are unusual, they demonstrate, again, individuals' willingness to follow what they believed to be the will of God, according to a 'different idea of what is important' (Abbie).

'I Had No Idea Where Albania Was': Destination Selection

It became strikingly apparent during the course of analysing the fieldwork that for the vast majority of participants their decision to migrate to Albania had been preceded by an openness to, and consideration of, a number of different destination countries. Indeed, having heard 'the call' there was typically a period of uncertainty about where

they were being called to, which ranged from a matter of weeks to several years. The focus therefore was initially less on the specificities of place than on being willing to obey God's command. This finding was succinctly summed up by a comment Emma made in passing, 'I didn't know where Albania was. But I had already decided that I was going to go wherever God called me. So that's why I came. But the decision to go wherever kind of came even before that point. I had already decided that that was what I was going to do'. It was only after their initial decision to submit to God therefore that they went on to learn more about Albania, and their destination became clearer over time. In the first life-focused interview that I highlight here however, 'the call' to mission was very specific to Albania, and the participant made the decision to commit his life to the country knowing only very little about it. Meanwhile, in the second life-focused interview, Brian recounts an intimate prayer time wherein God revealed to him that Albania would be his destination, 'not that I know anything about Albania or anything'. Yet again, while seemingly 'insane' to non-believers, these individuals were convinced of the rationality of their decision, and followed God, just as Grace reminds us that Abraham had done before them:

'You know, look at Abraham, at 75 God says 'take your wife, Sarah, and got to a place that I will show you'. He didn't say where it was, well, he just said, 'Go'. And so Abraham picks up his wife, his brother-in-law, his nephew, his father and they just start going. I mean, if you were to look at that from a human point of view, you'd be like, 'that's insane, you don't even know where you're going!'. But that was his step of faith, where he said, 'you know what God? I don't know where I'm going, but I know you do, so I'm just going to follow you'. And I think for some people, that looks a little bit more crazy than it does for other people...where for us it seemed very logical. 'Of course, we're moving to Albania, this is where we're supposed to be'. And when you're in the centre of where God wants you to be, it's not insane. It might look insane, but it's not'.

Andrew's Story

Andrew described to me how growing up he had been the kind of boy who mothers would shoo their child away from. Yet all this changed when he was 13, and decided to accept Christ as his Lord and Saviour. With no real understanding of what Christian service entailed, let alone mission, he told God that he would serve Him in any way he was asked to. Flash forward to High School and Andrew chuckled as he relayed to me how one particularly innocuous lesson was to take on eternal significance:

'And as I'm sitting there looking through this geography book, in sociology class – I wasn't paying attention – and I came across this picture of an Albanian farmer. This was probably 1979. And as I looked down at the picture of this man in this geography book, he was this old man sitting on a hay wagon and there was this caption below that said this man from the most isolated Communist, Stalinist country in the World...as I went to turn over the page, I couldn't turn the page, I just kept looking at this man, and in that moment God had pressed deeply in my heart, the need that this man had for Christ. And in that moment of time, God completely changed the course and direction of my life. I knew that day one day, I would either share the hope of salvation with this man, or I would go to his country – whatever that country was. I had never heard of Albania before.'

Indeed, several participants reported how seemingly everyday objects went on to take spiritual significance for them. For example, Lindsey and Jason, a couple from San Francisco, first became aware of Albania when watching a home video made by her parents who were visiting missionaries in Tirana. Following this Lindsey described to me how Albania seemed 'to invade our everyday lives', whether it be through seeing an Albanian flag, using the internet to look up traditional music, or hearing news about the country on the television. For Donna meanwhile, it was the prayer magnet on her fridge, from friends who were missionaries to Albania, that seemed to keep catching her eye, and prompted her to reach for the National Geographic to learn more about the country. And again, for Andrew it was a National Geographic magazine that God

used to 'press deeply' into his heart the spiritual 'need' in Albania. Through this everyday encounter therefore Andrew believed that God had revealed His will for him to move to Albania, and in answering Him, the course and direction of his life was completely changed.

Brian's Story

Brian's story is one of the more spectacular that I collected during my fieldwork. Having spent time in Haiti and with missionaries across the world, Brian and his wife remained unsure of where they were being called to by God. At a week long meeting organized by their mission organization they were presented with information about several countries that were perceived to be in spiritual need, and therefore requiring missionaries. Of these, three caught their attention, but they felt unsure about which one to commit to. Emotionally exhausted they returned home and decided to pray. Brian shared with me his prayer,

'I want to know your will Father, show me where in the world you want me to take my family. And as I'm going through that I can see like Carolyn over there in the corner through the door in another room and she's reading her stuff. And in that moment it was like OOOMPH [makes sound effect] [pauses]. Albania? Did you just say Albania? Not in an audible way, but sitting there in God's presence praying through his word, I think maybe you just talked to me. And if I just heard right you said Albania. ...So I'm like, this is like 20 years since I was that little boy sitting up in the balcony at Church thinking I think maybe God wants me to be a missionary, and now I think God just gave me a place, and I think its Albania. Not that I know anything about Albania or whatever'.

Just like Andrew, Brian knew very little about Albania before God spoke to him. Yet after this one experience he and his family decided that they would listen to God, and began making the preparations to move to Albania. Again, while for non-believers this

might appear 'crazy' or 'insane', for the participants in this study, following God's direction was entirely rational, if not in the economic sense often adopted by migration theory.

Concluding Remarks

In this chapter I have argued that migration decision-making theories have typically been rooted within an economic conceptualisation of rationality. As I have explained, these theories hold little explanatory value for the participants in this study. At the same time however, and while recognising critiques of sociologists' attempts to marry rational choice and religion, I have suggested that the concept of rationality should not be disregarded altogether. Rather, by being attentive to 'theological frameworks of religious migrant practitioners themselves' (Tse, 2012: NP)²⁸, I found that missionaries believe their decision to be entirely rational, according to their own world-view and beliefs. Exploring this further I introduced the concept of 'the call', and examined both the mechanisms through which missionaries hear the call, and their reasons for answering it. In doing so I uncovered a 'religious rationale' shaping missionaries' migration, that is founded in obedience, duty and love. By bringing 'blinking into the sunlight the elements of an alternative universe of priorities, values and understandings' (Halfacree, 2004: 249) therefore, this chapter has demonstrated the need for non-economic rationalities as a key factor in explaining migration, and religious migration in particular.

²⁸ <http://jkhtse.wordpress.com/2012/10/16/homo-religiosus-religion-and-immigrant-subjectivities-co-authored-with-david-ley-in-religion-and-place-landscape-politics-piety-eds-peter-hopkins-lily-kong-and-elizabeth-olson/>

In the previous chapter I advocated for further recognition of non-economic conceptions of 'rationality' within migration decision-making, and built a picture of the 'religious rationale' that lies behind missionaries' movement. Continuing to consider missionaries' trajectory towards Albania, this chapter moves from asking 'why' to 'where'. Beginning in 1990, Albania 'has witnessed one of the great emigrations of recent times' (King & Vullnetari, 2003: 5), with one in five of the population living abroad by 2000. It is unsurprising therefore that to date, migration research has focused solely on Albania as a sending country (King et al., 1998; Gedeshi et al., 1999; Barjaba, 2000; Kule et al., 2002; Blumi, 2003; Bonifazi & Sabatino, 2003; Hatziprokopiou, 2003; Mai & Schwandner-Sievers, 2003; King et al., 2003; King, 2005; King & Schwandner-Sievers, 2005; King et al., 2006; King & Vullnetari, 2006). Yet, this thesis' focus on missionaries reveals an important migration stream into Albania, that has yet to be examined. In this chapter then I draw on empirical material to examine the role and positioning of Albania within the Evangelical world-view, and consider how missionaries' migration streams are shaped by these rationales.

I find that Albania occupies a specific place and role within the 'collective geopolitical imaginations' (Dittmer & Dodds, 2008: 447) of Evangelicals. First, I uncover two contrasting discourses around the state of Islam in Albania, the first of which envisages Albania as an Islamic bloc, and the second as a country at 'tipping point'. Building on the latter, I examine how Albania is portrayed as a country caught 'in the middle' between Christianity and the West, and Islam and the East. Within this missionary worldview there is an on-going battle for the soul(s) of the country between Christianity and Islam, which at times becomes manifest in the material landscape. Further, I find that for missionaries it is important that Albania is 'won for Christ', not simply as an end in itself, but also for the wider task of world evangelisation. This is because the missionaries in this study envisage Albania as a strategically important 'gateway' to the

'Muslim World'. Through this portal both non-Albanian, and Albanian missionaries are envisioned as being able to spread out into North Africa and the Middle East. Thus, while being a small nation, missionaries expect Albania to play a key role in spreading the Gospel to Muslim nations, by virtue of its geographic location. Beyond this however, Albania is also deemed a significant country because of the cultural traits of the Albanians themselves. I uncover a discourse wherein Albanians are depicted as 'culturally Muslim', having Muslim names and experiences but without faith itself. With this in mind, Evangelicals imagine Albanians as 'trojan horses' for Christianity abroad, able to access, and adapt to, Muslim countries with more ease than their non-Albanian counterparts. Albania is therefore considered an important missionary destination not only for the sake of Albanian souls, but also the wider task of evangelising the 'Muslim world'.

This chapter consequently builds an argument which underlines the importance of geo-spiritual imaginaries to the operation of Christian Evangelical missions. Rather than purely focusing on the significance of Evangelical missionaries' discursive constructions of the world, it also adds empirical richness to 'the central assumption of geopolitical study: [that] the views we hold about the world have real impacts upon the way we act in it' (Megoran, 2010: 387). In this case, I show how Evangelicals' geopolitical visions of Albania have, to an extent, shaped missionary migration streams, and in turn catalysed the further movement of Evangelical Albanians abroad. In doing so this chapter is attentive to the rationales shaping missionaries' migration to Albania, and contributes to literature around geopolitics and its relation to migration and mobility, which 'remain[s] an underdeveloped area of scholarship' (Hyndman, 2012: 253).

Albania as Contested Geo-Spiritual Space: Evangelicalism v. Islam

As I examined in Chapter Two, the relationship between religion and geopolitics has, in recent years, become an increasing focus of academic research (see Agnew, 2006; Dijkink, 2006; Sturm, 2006; Dittmer, 2007a; Megoran, 2006, 2010, 2013). In part this interest can be traced back to the rising prominence of Al-Qaeda, the response of the

George W. Bush White House to this 'organisation', and subsequent 'religious calls to war' (Agnew, 2006). Indeed, atrocities such as 9/11 in New York in 2001, and the 7th July bombings in London in 2005, have made the interconnections between religion and geopolitics ever more visible. Given that these events were undertaken by Muslim 'extremists', it is unsurprising that 'geopolitics within the Islamic tradition has...received the most attention (Yorgason & Robertson, 2006: 256). In the following sections however, I focus on the geopolitical visions of Evangelical missionaries, and explore how 'geopolitics does not apply only to statecraft; ordinary people typically use geopolitical prisms' too (Yorgason & Hwang Chen, 2008: 479). More specifically, I begin by examining why missionaries were initially attracted to service in Albania, and identify the countries' legacy of Communism and Islam as key factors. Focusing on the latter, I go on to identify two discourses around the state of Islam in Albania, and examine how the country is imagined as a contested space, wherein Muslim and Evangelical missionaries are vying for souls.

As I discussed in the previous chapter, the majority of missionaries had made a decision to commit to moving abroad before actually settling on Albania as their destination. For a few, Albania was revealed to them as their destination in an exceptional moment, when they still knew little about the country. For most of the participants however, Albania was chosen over a longer period, through a combination of praying to God for direction, consulting mission organisations, personal research into potential destinations, and importantly the consideration of different countries' 'spiritual needs'. Indeed, across the life-focused interviews there were a multitude of ways in which participants reached the decision that they would travel to Albania. What was consistent however was the emphasis that they placed on, first, Albania's history of Communism, and second, its occupation by the Ottoman Empire and the influence of Islam. Over a coffee at the Stephen Centre, for example, a missionary doctor called Brian described Albania as:

‘a place that declared God literally dead. And that became one of the most closed countries in the world that followed an isolationist regime, a Communist naturalistic philosophy. And before that there was 500 years of Middle Eastern Muslim influence. And the result of that has been a nation that has been ravished...any truth about who God is and what His reality is has literally been persecuted and killed out’.

In this stark excerpt, Brian dramatically asserts that a history of Communism and Islam have left Albania ‘ravished’ and ‘any truth about who God is’ destroyed. This sentiment echoed across the fieldwork, and I frequently heard missionaries describe the ‘pull’ towards choosing Albania as their mission destination within the context of wanting to combat one, or both of these legacies. As part of this there was a tendency to portray Communism and Islam as antithetical to God, constructing (to varying degrees) ‘binary geographies of good-Christian and evil-Communist or Muslim’ (Sturm, 2010: 135). Consequently, there was a sense that the missionaries envisaged Albania as a space to be fought over, and that their decision to travel to, and work in Albania rendered them part of this struggle.

Indeed, looking at wider currents in Evangelical thought it becomes apparent that at different times, both Communism and Islam have been envisioned as God’s adversaries. As Sturm and Dittmer (2010:13) explain, ‘during the Cold War, the USSR was the enemy of America and of God to most American Evangelicals. Similarly, since the end of the Cold War, Arabs, particularly Muslims, in the Middle East have become one of the most sought after (and most difficult) targets for conversion’ (Sturm & Dittmer, 2010: 14). Responding to which, a number of prominent Evangelical figures in the U.S have revealed themselves to ‘be among [Islam’s] most caustic critics’ (Cimino, 2005: 163) post 9/11. In 2002, for example, the evangelist Franklin Graham labelled Islam a ‘very wicked and evil religion’. Moreover, some Evangelicals have argued that not only is Islam ‘evil’, but also demonic, and that as such Muslim countries are in the clutches of Satan (see Cimino, 2005a). A key spokesperson exemplary of this view is C.

Peter Wagner, an Evangelical Christian that operates an organisation called Global Harvest Ministries, which provides training to missionaries and pastors in spiritual warfare. In 2002, for instance, he penned a newsletter proclaiming that 'one-billion Muslims worship a high-ranking demon who has gone by the name of 'Allah' since long before Mohammed was born' (Wagner, 2002:4-5, cited in Cimino, 2005b: 1).

According to this discourse, the world can be carved up 'into simplistic categories such as good/evil' (Dittmer & Dodds, 2008:440), and Islamic countries assigned to the latter. Speaking about the way that Evangelicals have come to conceptualise Islamic countries, Rev. Richard Cizik, the vice president for governmental affairs of the National Association of Evangelicals, further corroborates Sturm and Dittmer (2010), arguing that 'Evangelicals have substituted Islam for the Soviet Union' (Rev. Cizik, cited in Goodstein, 2003: NP). In other words, 'the Muslims have become the modern day equivalent of the Evil Empire' (National Catholic Reporter, 2003). Rather than demarcating on maps the regions and countries under Communist rule, today Evangelicals are busy carving out what they consider to be 'the Muslim world', and their next targets for proselytisation. Correspondingly there has been a sharp rise in interest and support for Muslim-specific mission (Hancock, 2013), with one missiologist noting that 'the most significant missions development since 9/11 has been the increased number of students who want to be missionaries to Muslims (Woodberry, 2011: 3). Indeed, while 'Christians have long seen Islam as one of their major competitors - sometimes their primary competitor - for souls on the global stage' (Kidd, 2009: xxi), 'patterns of missional migration are changing' (Naish, 2008: 22) in favour of a further concentration of Evangelical mission to countries perceived as Islamic.

Tying in to this trend, I quickly noticed a bias in how Albania was presented within promotional material disseminated by Evangelical mission organisations, churches, and missionaries to their supporters. On websites, blogs, and pamphlets, Albania was often identified as a 'majority Muslim' or what could be called a 'big M', Muslim country. The effect of this is significant, since it piques peoples' interest, particularly given the

aforementioned increase in Evangelicals wishing to undertake mission to Muslims. One afternoon, for example, I spoke to Geraldine, an elderly lady from America who was in Albania on a short-term mission trip. She explained that she had been led to 'understand it's about 70% Muslim here', and that had played a part in her decision to come to Albania. Going on, she added 'I don't know if you know much about the Muslims. They're very aggressive in doing it their way. And as soon as they can, they will put the clamps on and push out Christianity'. Within such a view, Albania is therefore subsumed into the 'Muslim world', and identified as a field on which to continue the wider battle between Islam and Christianity for soul(s) worldwide. Indeed, this designation of Albania as a 'big M' country, or Muslim bloc, continues, despite there being no actual reliable figures available for Albania's religious population. In a booklet made by Campus Crusade for Christ, for example, an outdated statistic from 1939 is evoked in the phrase 'today about 70% of Albanians come from a Muslim tradition.' In addition its front cover carries the titles 'Albania An Open Door to the Muslim World' and 'Join Us in Reaching Muslims for Christ' (Figure 5.1 Overleaf). In doing so the image of Albania as a 'Muslim stronghold' is perpetuated (See Waitt & Head, 2002; Pritchard & Morgan, 2003 on geographical imaginations portrayed through postcards). Talking about this tendency to portray Albania as a Muslim majority country, one participant proffered the theory that it was to a large extent a somewhat naive 'marketing strategy', designed to encourage more missionaries to choose Albania, and to elicit further funds. Indeed, several missionaries spoke of their disappointment upon realising, having spent time in Albania, that it is not necessarily the staunchly Islamic country that they had expected.

Indeed, during my fieldwork on the ground with long-term missionaries, I also discovered a second and more nuanced discourse around the current influence of Islam in Albania. Rather than resolutely argue that Albania is a 'Muslim majority' country, in the sense that 70% of people in Albania were actually practicing Muslims, in informal discussions and interviews, missionaries drew my attention to the proliferation of 'nominal Muslims' or 'cultural Muslims'. These were individuals who, if asked, would describe themselves as Muslim, but who did not actually have a deep rooted faith. To

explain this religious stance, participants frequently made reference to Albania's tumultuous history. Given its geographical location, Albania is often depicted as being at 'the crossroads of civilisation' (Stutzman, 1998: 50), and has been the victim of constant invasions by foreign forces, including the Greeks, Romans, Normans, Bulgarians, Serbs, Turks, Italians, and Germans. Each of these groups introduced religious ideas, most notably the Turks, who brought Islam to Albania during the 500 year reign of the Ottoman Empire (1385 - 1912). According to historians (see Janz, 1998) it was important therefore that Albanians were able to 'shape-shift', depending on the dominant religion of each period. The result, according to not only missionaries, but also wider social commentary, is 'a debate within Albanian society over the country's place in Europe and the Muslim World' (Gjuraj, 2000:34).

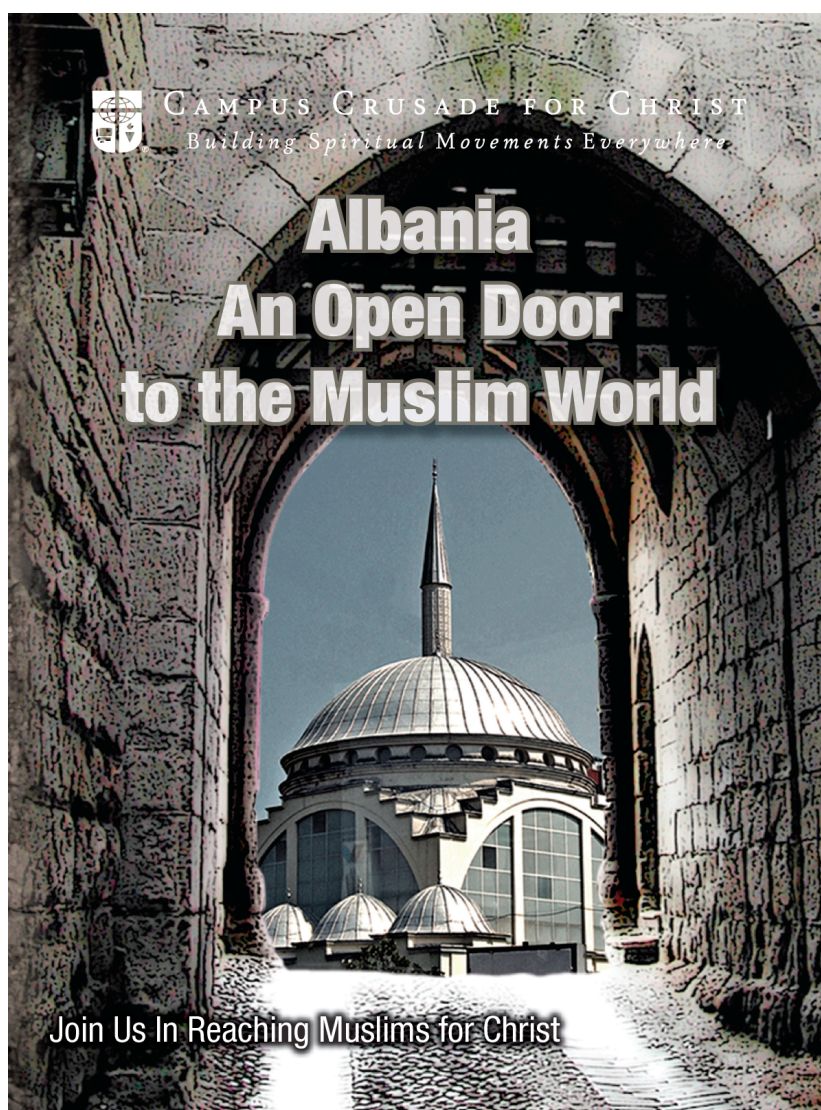


Figure 5.1: Campus Crusade For Christ Leaflet (Source, CCC)

Within the political realm this issue has therefore been hotly debated. On the one hand, while scholars (and some of the missionary participants) have documented increasing ties with the Muslim world, principally Turkey, on the other hand, Draper (1997) makes the important point that this has not necessarily seen a corresponding decline in relations with European states. This is clearly underlined by Albania's current attempt to become a member of the European Union. According to Ven (2007: 32) a country's religious identity is of importance in this process, since while secularist countries such as the UK, France and the Scandinavian members attempt to underplay the role of religion in acceptance, the EU is to some degree a 'Christian club'. Corroborating which, Valery Giscard d'Estaing, who chaired the Convention on the Future of Europe, which was responsible for writing the European Constitutional Treaty, is quoted in a French newspaper as saying that Europe had 'three sources of identity: Greco – Roman philosophy and law, Enlightenment Humanism, and...Judeo – Christian religion' (Cited in Ven, 2007:32). Moreover, Samuel Huntingdon has voiced the opinion that Turkey has had difficulties securing admission since 'the European powers have made it clear that they do not want a Muslim state....in the European Union' (In Gjuraj, 2000:34). In view of this Ismail Kadare – one of Albania's most revered intellectuals – has called for en mass conversions to Christianity in order to ensure its place in the European Union (Vickers and Pettifer, 1997). Albania's place within the wider world therefore appears to be very much in question, as politicians and normal Albanians alike debate how to position themselves.

To describe this situation, Adam, a senior staff member at the AEP, imagined Albania as a 'third culture kid', a term that has in recent years been applied to missionaries themselves (Collier, 2008; Pollock et al., 2009):

'They don't fit into any of the countries in which they live, they never feel at home in any of them. Albania is a third culture kid. It's caught between Christianity and the West, and Islam and the East' (Adam).

In this discourse therefore, while Albania is not a 'majority Muslim' country in the staunch sense that promotional material sometimes depicted, it did continue to be heavily influenced by Islam. Indeed, Albania continued to varying degrees, to be imagined as 'Muslim space', and set up 'in an imaginative mental geography, designating [it] as [an] entity and imbuing [it] with qualities, providing a discursive framework through which [a] war could be thought and fought' (Megoran, 2006: 564). I frequently heard, for example, that Albania was 'spiritually dark', veiled under 'clouds of darkness' or as one participant described it, 'the Devil's playground'. In part this imagery was used to describe what a 'Godless' country looks like, having inherited the legacy of twenty-four years of enforced state atheism. At the same time however, Islam was identified as 'an oppressive force in Albania', as producing 'chaos', and again, as equated with darkness. Emma, for example, recounted to me a vision wherein she saw darkness spreading out from a Mosque, and captives clapped in chains. Years later when she was reading an article about Albania, and reflecting on two bible verses that focus on 'setting the captives free, and darkness', she made the connection between this vision and the state of Albania's spiritual landscape. Images of darkness and drudgery were therefore used to imagine the influence of Islam in Albania, and to justify 'an intervention animated not by nationalism but, rather, by the values of a powerful religious global actor within society' (Gerhardt, 2008:912).

In view of all this, many missionaries envisaged themselves less in an outright battle with a 'Muslim majority' bloc, but instead in a tug of war with Islam, epitomised by a popular slogan used in the Albanian media since the collapse of Communism: 'towards Europe or Islam?' (Vickers & Pettifer, 1997:104). Yet rather than struggling with the legacy of Islam alone, missionaries were also aware that just as Evangelical Christians had flocked to Albania to influence the outcome of Albania's contemporary religious and political trajectory, so too did Islamic groups. Indeed, Tristan stressed to me that 'there's an incredible amount of Muslim world missionaries [in Albania], maybe they don't use the word, 'missionary', but they're propagating Islam here. It's a very strategic

place for the Islamic world.’ (Tristan). Reflecting this, *Operation World*²⁹ began monitoring the work of Islamic missionaries in Albania after the fall of Communism:

Operation World (Johnstone, 1993) 5th Edition

‘Muslims from the Middle East have mounted a massive effort to re-Islamize the country by means of missionaries, scholarship, aid, mosque building and drawing the country into the Muslim world’.

Operation World (Johnstone et al., 2001) 6th Edition

Muslim countries have poured in huge amounts of aid and missionaries. Over one million Qur’ans have been distributed, 900 mosques refurbished or built between 1993 and 1995, and thousands given scholarships to study Muslim theology abroad. The government secretly joined the World Muslim League and the Organisation of the Islamic Conference to the dismay of many. Most of the mosques are poorly attended and ignorance of Islam is high among professing Muslims. Pray that Albania may be spared the sorrows of extreme Islamism, and that Muslims may turn from the religion forced on the population in the 14th century by their Turkish Ottoman conquerors.

Within these excerpts therefore, we see that Muslim missionaries are depicted as having been engaged in (re)creating an Islamic infrastructure in Albania. At the beginning of the 1990s in particular, Islamic individuals and delegations began to visit Albania, after which aid projects were started using finance from Turkey, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Schemes included the restoration or rebuilding of mosques and Islamic schools, and the provision of scholarships for young Albanians to study Islamic theology abroad. Given the lack of capital investment from America and Europe the acceptance of these funds was deemed to be a necessity, since by 1994 the majority of investment

²⁹ Operation World produces books detailing prayer information about the world.

available was of a non-European and non-American origin (Draper, 1997). And this legacy is understood to continue today. For example, one missionary made reference to a sign, erected in Skanderbeg Square and detailing the financial aid given by Kuwait for a revitalisation project, as evidence of this (Plate 5.1 Below).



Plate 5.1: Photograph of a Sign in Skanderbeg Square (Author, September 2011)

Meanwhile, another missionary shared with me,

'I mean, who's building all the highways? You've got Saudi Arabia building that big highway between Elbasan and Tirana. Who's putting on some of the best education? The Turks. And underlying it is kind of the movement of Islam in that. And so, you know, Albania has always been this clash of East and West. You know, I think it's still just as strategic, even though the world doesn't understand it. But the Middle East does. Why would the Saudis want to build a million dollar parliament across the street? They can own the debt of Albania, and therefore they can have a stronghold, a strong foothold, at least politically here' (Cole).

Indeed, the highways and mosques being built were understood as a physical manifestation of the spiritual battle on-going between Evangelicalism and Islam. In response to this, the increase in mosques, and the erection of a new Orthodox church in the centre of Tirana, plans are afoot to build a landmark Evangelical church which will act as a visual beacon. Fundraising for the project began in 2002 in America, and over 1 million dollars have been raised. Ellie told me that 'the vision is that this building will become sort of a beacon....to gain recognition to the Evangelical church, to bring credibility to it, and a centre that could really bless the city.'

In this section then, I have argued that missionaries' attraction to Albania is largely influenced by their desire to counter the influence of Communism and Islam, which are constructed in opposition to 'the truth of God'. Building on which, I explicated two alternative discourses, used at different times, by different individuals, around the state of Islam in Albania. The first envisages Albania as a 'big M' Muslim country, subsumed into a wider bloc which missionaries referred to as 'the Muslim world'. The second is more nuanced, and imagines Albania as a 'Third Culture Kid' caught in a tug of war between Islam and the East and Christianity and the West. In both however Albania was imagined as a terrain caught in a spiritual battle, in which Evangelical missionaries had a key role to play.

The Gateway to the 'Muslim World': David & Goliath, Frodo and Albanian Missionaries

As we saw in the previous section Evangelical missionaries in Albania imagine themselves to be in competition with Muslims for the soul(s) of Albania. At the same time, and as this section will explore further, Evangelical work in Albania is considered to be imperative, not simply as an end in itself, but also with a view to bringing Christ to the wider 'Muslim world' beyond Albania.

Fieldnotes, Wings of Friendship (WOF)³⁰ Office, 13th October 2011

Across the back wall of Andrew's office was one of the largest world maps that I have ever seen. It dominated the room. During the interview he got to his feet and invited me to walk over and stand beside the map, before starting to explain to me how Wings of Friendship operates. In an animated voice he said to me, 'when I describe the two aspects of our work, I say, one, we focus on the Albanians, the other thing we focus on is Albania, geographically, as a strategic staging area for the advancement of the Gospel into other countries, Muslim countries.' Raising his hand he began to point to the map, sketching out routes from country to country, 'so, here's Albania, here's North Africa. You probably never would have thought this, but you know, there's just Italy that exists between Albania and Tunisia, for example. And just south of Albania is Libya, then you go East and here's Turkey, here's the Middle East. So, in terms of the Muslim world, Albania is very, very strategic'.

The above extract is from my fieldnotes, written about a meeting with Andrew, the head of Wings of Friendship, a mission organisation based in Tirana. Andrew's reference to Albania as being 'very, very strategic' was of little surprise to me, having

³⁰ Wings of Friendship is a pseudonym for an Evangelical mid-stream and international sending agency based in Tirana.

heard the same sentiment echoed countless times by other Evangelical missionaries. Indeed, in asking missionaries why they felt there were so many of them based in Albania, I continually received a variation on the same answer: that Albania was a highly 'strategic' nation, that if 'reached for Christ', would play a major role in the larger 'battle for World evangelisation'. Sweeping his hand across the map on his office wall, Andrew brought this to life, and visually demonstrated one of the rationales shaping missionaries' migration to Albania: that its geographic location renders it an important 'springboard' or 'gateway' to the wider 'Muslim world', through which both foreign, and as I will discuss in the following section, Albanian, missionaries can flow.

Indeed, tracing the distance with his finger between Albania and countries such as Tunisia, Libya, Turkey and the Middle East more broadly, Andrew had stressed how, because of Albania's geographic positioning, it is a 'strategic staging area for the advancement of the Gospel into other countries, Muslim countries.' Similarly, other missionaries used phrases such as 'springboard', 'gateway' and 'bridge', to describe how Albania is envisaged as being a 'very, very strategic stepping stone' (Geraldine) from which to journey into the 'Muslim world'. Further, this idea is disseminated in promotional literature such as that produced by Campus Crusade for Christ. The quote below is taken from one of their pamphlets, and is a short testimony about the importance of recognising Albania as not 'just another mission field':

'I had no idea of the strategic importance of Albania and the role it and this ministry can play in reaching the Islamic world for Christ. Thus, I no longer see Albania as just another mission field. This is a Great Commission gateway, staffed by incredibly gifted and dedicated people, which my church and I need to become more committed to as strategic partners'.

Aware of Albania's perceived potential, Andrew established WoF, which is housed in a small structure off of one of Tirana's bustling backstreets. Operating under the strap-line 'discovering innovative paths to the Least Reached', it is unusual in that it operates as a

'mid-stream' organisation. One of the first of its kind, it has several aims, including 'bridg[ing] the gap between senders (up stream) and receivers (downstream)'. By this it is meant that the organisation works to remedy situations where missionaries (senders/upstream) have only a limited relationship with those whom they are going to serve (receivers/downstream). Conversely, when downstream receivers have missionaries who are ready to go out, but do not know where, or how, to do so, WoF looks to fill this gap by networking people together, and removing any obstacles to mobilising missionary workers. In addition, WoF runs a programme called the Balkan Institute for Culture and Linguistics (BICAL) in Tirana. BICAL provides 'cultural and linguistic education and hands-on church planting practicum to missionaries in transit' towards Muslim countries. Beyond Albania's significant geographic location, Andrew also underlined the importance of the country's culture to foreign mission. In particular he stressed its unique position as a 'majority Muslim' country that is open to missionary activity. Albania, according to this discourse, is therefore a prime location for missionaries looking to travel to a Muslim country and wanting to familiarise themselves with 'Eastern culture'. During our interview together, for example, Andrew told me:

'Albania is Eastern in it's culture. If you were to go to Kyrgyzstan, one of the things that these Albanians said is, "This is Albania." Everything's the same, the music, the culture. They would say the only thing that's different is the language. The food was the same, so many of the things were the same. So it's a great training ground in terms of getting the taste of what it would be like to live in Iraq or Iran or Syria, places like that.'

Albania's geographic location is therefore strategic as a stage from which to enter the 'Muslim world'. In addition it's cultural legacy is utilised as an asset by missionaries looking to acclimatise themselves to an 'Eastern culture'. Albania's geographic space, and cultural identity, are therefore viewed as important tools in the battle against Islam, and form part of the rationale shaping missionaries' choice of migration destination.

Alongside conceptualising Albania as a strategically important country for evangelisation because of its geographic location, I also found a discourse wherein Albanians were presented as being uniquely positioned to infiltrate and influence Muslim countries. In other words, Albanians were understood to have been appointed by God to play an important role in the wider task of evangelising to Muslims. Consequently, the missionaries in this study understood both Albania as geographic space, and the Albanians themselves, as key players in bringing Christ to Muslims, and the battle with Islam more generally. Taken together, these rationales were cited as explanations for the large number of foreign missionaries in Albania, and in turn the propulsion of Albanian missionaries abroad.

In the excerpts below, for example, Albania is compared to two diminutive, and underestimated characters: David, and Frodo:

Interview, Coffee Shop in Tirana, 30th April 2011

'I was praying and I was just like, I know this country is significant, but what is the significance? Tell me about it, God. And He took me to the Bible story about Samuel and David. And when Samuel went to the King, it was like he went to all the older sons who looked like they were more likely to do it, they were strong. But it was like, 'there's another son, there's another son.' There's still David, he's out in the field, he's looking after the sheep, and they said, 'he's just young, what can he do? He looks after sheep'. And it was like God was speaking to me about the Albanians. You know, God will really use them....I almost feel like God has put a lot into this nation because...He's equipping them that they can go (Juliette).

'Frodo in the Lord of the Rings is very much like us. Young, and small, from an insignificant people in the eyes of the World. But when Frodo saw the need to take the ring to mount doom, he was ready to go with the ring. Others, the big people, were discussing how difficult the task was. But Frodo was ready to do his part.'

In the first of these, Juliette, a British missionary, was sharing with me why, despite popular social conceptions, she believes Albania to be a 'significant country'. Using the story of David and Goliath³¹ (see 1 Samuel:17) to illustrate her point, she explained to me that while Albania has been overlooked, or even ignored, 'God will really use' the Albanians. More specifically, she argued that God has chosen to 'put a lot into this nation' (e.g foreign missionaries) so that Albanians will be equipped to become missionaries themselves. Meanwhile, in the second extract, taken from a promotional video by Campus Crusade for Christ (CCC), Albania is likened to another character: Frodo. Utilising the story of the Lord of the Rings the National Director of the organisation asserts that within the context of 'The Fellowship of the Great Commission' Albania, just like Frodo, has a significant role to play in the task of world evangelisation. Indeed, as this section argues, Albanians are deemed to be uniquely positioned to infiltrate, influence, and ultimately convert Muslims, leading to Albanian missionaries being 'sent out'.

At the first Balkan World Mission Conference, held in Tirana in April 2010, the attendees were asked by a well respected pastor in Albania, 'how many of you leaders have some type of ministry outside of the borders of your nation?' The question was

³¹ In the story Saul and the Israelites are engaged in battle with the Philistines. Twice a day for 40 days the strongest of the Philistines, Goliath, would issue a challenge to the Israelites, calling for them to settle the outcome through single combat. All the Israelites were afraid to face him however, and no one stepped forward. That is, until David, an unlikely contender, agreed to accept the challenge. People doubted his ability to defeat this great warrior, but armed only with a staff and sling he succeeded.

met with an enthusiastic response, with hands raised across the room. Seeing whose arm had shot into the air the pastor continued by asking all those who were not Albanian to respond to his question again. Not one hand went up. This, the founder of WoF explained to me, was testament that it is 'only the Albanians that were taking this message beyond the borders of their own country. What does that then make Albania? It makes them a leader. So God has taken the least and the last and the lonely, and in his wisdom, in his economy, he has thrust them to a place of leadership'. Indeed, in the past few years alone, WoF has sent Albanian mission teams to Iran, Turkey, and India, and are looking to visit China. In the meantime Campus Crusade for Christ has also sent out Albanian missionaries to inter alia Bosnia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Turkey and Lebanon. This is depicted in a CCC promotional video, which features arrows shooting out of Albania (See Figure 5.2 Below).



Figure 5.2 : Screenshot from CCC Promotional Video

Encouraging Albanians to become not only believers, but also missionaries, was deemed to be extremely important by all of the participants in this study. Summing this up, Kate succinctly expressed the rationale behind this widely held view: 'I think that God bringing the Gospel here, to Albania, His main purpose is not just to save the

Albanians, but also to use the Albanian believers here to bring the Gospel to Muslim people around the world'. And put another way, Ryan said, 'we really feel like God wants us to raise up Albanians to go to some of these places, and that this is where the Muslim advance was stopped, and that from here it's going to start to go back, that Christianity will start to move back into some of those parts of the world...It's payback time'. Examining this discourse further, I found that whereas missionaries are hoping to swing Albania's 'third culture kid' identity toward Christianity, in the case of sending Albanians abroad, their cultural ambiguity was deemed to be an asset. Brian, a doctor, told me, 'some of us hope that Albania can be a bridge country. It would be a lot easier for our interns to go to Turkey than it is an American...so maybe it's a stepping stone that God knows is coming'. Elaborating on this, he explained that because Albanians are widely perceived to be Muslim, they are welcome in countries that 'Western' missionaries are not. Building on which, Joy echoed Brian's thoughts and added that 'culturally, they've got some similarities with the Muslim world, because even just things like weddings and funerals and the way they dress, or ways they interact, those things are easier. So it's easier for them to slip into another Muslim culture'. This was further underlined in CCCs promotional pamphlet, which stated that:

'Over the centuries God has been uniquely preparing tiny Albania with a Muslim majority to become a significant and strategic stepping stone to the Muslim world to places like Kosovo, Turkey, Macedonia, Bosnia and Lebanon and to play a key part in building an unstoppable movement among Muslims....Because of a common history of several centuries which has left its imprint in both of our cultures influenced by Islam,there is a close affinity between Albanians and Turks'.

Consequently, Albanians were considered the ideal candidates to carry the Gospel message into the 'Muslim world'. One such Albanian is Zhujeta, who longs to be an Evangelical Christian missionary. She came to know Christ following interactions with missionaries who came to visit her village in the South of Albania. Crediting their hard work, she spoke to me about how the example that they had set, had made her feel:

‘this gratitude, and made me think I want to do the same thing. I want to go and share the Gospel with people who haven’t heard, like me...I would hear in my church about different projects that could be done in different places, and every time I thought, I really want to be involved in those projects, so that I can go somewhere where I can share the Gospel. Not that I cannot do it here, but my desire is to go to other places and share...my desire to go and be a missionary has been growing a lot.’

At the time of the research Zhujeta was working as an assistant administrator at WoF. The year before she had been with the organisation to India as part of a group of six, on a short-term mission trip. She had also recently undertaken a ‘reconnaissance’ trip to Iraq for the organisation. Zhujeta felt that God had put Iraq ‘on [her] heart’, and as part of planning to become a long-term missionary there, she had gone to collect information on the living conditions, spiritual needs, and possibilities for ministry.

Meanwhile, Arlinda is a 27 year old Albanian from Tirana, currently working as an intern for WoF. During an interview together, she also talked to me about her desire to become a missionary,

‘first it was just other missionaries’ example, or, I want to be like them, you know? But then reading the Bible and understanding, I found out that it’s the calling from God. When Jesus resurrected and went to Heaven he said, ‘go and make disciples from all the nations’...if the missionary wouldn’t have come to Tirana, or in Albania, how would we have heard about the Gospel? Because we were a Communist country, and maybe there were some during Communism, but not many. So if we didn’t have someone to hear from, how could we believe?’

Zhujeta and Arlinda are just two believers that I encountered who felt the desire to leave Albania, and to travel abroad, in order to share the Gospel message. Yet, from conversations with mission organisation leaders, and foreign missionaries, there seems

to be many more considering this path. Indeed, the importance of the promotion of missionary work amongst Albanians appears to have been at the heart of the foreign Evangelical missionary effort since its inception. As this section has argued, this is in a large part the result of foreign missionaries vision of Albania and Albanians themselves as having a highly strategic role within the task of evangelisation in Muslim countries, and the world more generally.

Concluding Remarks

Albania has suffered from 'a vacuum of understanding – filled in recent years with essentially negative images' (Hall, 1999: 161). This was infamously exemplified by AA Gill's (2006) article for *The Sunday Times*, wherein he asked, 'will the world ever take Albania seriously?...Any sentence with Albania in it is likely to get a laugh. Albania is funny. It's a punchline, a Gilbert and Sullivan country, a Ruritania of brigands and vendettas and pantomime royalty'. Yet contrary to such commentaries, the missionaries in this study envisage Albania as being anything but funny or insignificant. Rather, this chapter has argued that Albania has come to be conceptualised by Evangelical missionaries as a key territory, both in terms of winning souls for Christ in Albania, but also the wider 'Muslim world'. In particular, I have made several arguments about missionaries' rationale surrounding Albania as mission destination. I have argued, first, that missionaries were initially attracted to service in Albania because of the legacy of Communism and Islam, which are envisioned as antithetical to God. Second, that the influence of Islam in Albania is depicted in two separate discourses, as either rendering the country a 'Muslim majority' or 'Third Culture Kid'. And third, that Albania is a highly strategic country in the bid to evangelise the 'Muslim world' because of both its geographic location, and the religious identity of Albanians themselves. Consequently, I have made the broader argument that the missionary migration stream to Albania, is, to an extent, shaped by the specific place of the country within the Evangelical geopolitical imagination.

'Mission Also Belongs to Those Who Send' : The Transnational Relationships Between Missionaries and Their Supporters

In Chapters Four and Five I considered the initial stages of the migration trajectory, and focused on the rationales that shaped missionaries' decision to migrate, as well as their migration destination. In this chapter I turn to consider missionaries' life once in Albania, and examine the transnational social relations that not only facilitated their migration, but also become manifest in their day to day lives. Indeed, within geography, academics have increasingly recognised the need to conceptualise place as constituted by the social interactions that it melds together, rather than as bounded and hermetically sealed. Building on Massey's (1994: 156) seminal work, studies have heeded the need for 'a global sense of the local, [and] a global sense of place'. In the same spirit, scholars of transnationalism have in recent years shown how migrants' lives are constituted not simply by what goes on within national boundaries, but also 'the multiple ties and interactions linking people or institutions across the borders of nation states' (Vertovec, 1999: 447; see also Levitt, 2001; Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004; Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007; Nieswand, 2011). Arising out of which, scholars interested in religion have shown an increasing interest in examining, amongst other issues, how transnational religious institutions facilitate (or discourage) immigrant incorporation (Brodwin, 2003; Kemp & Rajman, 2003; Levitt, 2004; Hirschman, 2004); the way that religious identities and practices link immigrants to their homeland (Tweed, 1999; McAlister, 2002); the transmission of 'religious remittances' (Levitt, 1998a; Sheringham, 2010a); and the creolisation of religious practices that occurs when transnational migrants 'keep feet in two worlds...and thicken the globalisation of religious life' (Levitt, 2004: 2). Yet despite this flurry of interest, and widespread recognition that missionaries 'are amongst the oldest of the transnationals' (Rudolph, 1997: 1), their lives have rarely been examined using this lens. Indeed, while Wuthnow and Offut (2008: 212) write that 'missionaries continue to be an important transnational religious connection', there has been a paucity of empirical material to flesh out such claims.

During the course of my research I found that it was impossible to understand the everyday lives of Evangelical missionaries in Albania without looking at their relationships with institutions and individuals outside of Albania, through which religious people, resources, practices, and ideas circulated. I became acutely aware of how geographically extensive these relationships were, creating networks that linked, for example, a South African missionary in a town in Albania, an Albanian church, a church in the UK, an Albanian missionary in Turkey, and a supporter in the United States in a wider transnational social field. While the macro-level of mission organisations, and meso-level of churches and seminaries were important in these networks, this chapter focuses on missionaries' micro-level (see Ebaugh & Chafetz, 2002: 166) relationships with supporters, which were highly significant to their daily lives. Indeed, as one participant explained it, missionaries are 'part of a puzzle, a big jigsaw puzzle, and we are just one part'. Expressing the same sentiment, missiologists Moreau et al. (2004: 203) write that mission 'never has been the province solely of those who go; it also belongs to those who send - by their prayers and by their gifts'. Put another way, those 'who go' are only one part of a larger enterprise, wherein those 'who send' (i.e. supporters) also have an essential role. Rather than comprising of just a one off financial contribution, for example, I found that the transnational social relationships between missionaries and their supporters were of a sustained nature. Whether it be through the transfer of funds, more intimate communication via prayer letters, emails, Facebook or Skype, or simply through missionaries' perceptions of their expectations, supporters were intrinsically bound up in the day to day personal, and working lives of the missionaries that I studied. The tentacles of missionaries' lives were therefore both geographically extensive, and intensive.

As I discussed in Chapter Two, the dynamics of such transnational relationships have been conceptualised in several different ways in recent years. For example, Vasquez (2008) has identified three different clusters of metaphors that have been employed by scholars writing on transnationalism. These include spatial metaphors, 'hydraulic tropes' such as flows or 'scapes', and concepts that focus on connectivity, drawing on the imagery of networks and webs. Within the literature on religion and transnational

migration, it is the latter two of these that have proved most popular. Influenced by Appadurai's (1996) work, McAlister (1998: 156) has for example invented the concept of 'religioscapes' to describe 'the subjective religious maps (and attendant theologies) of diasporic communities who are also in global flow and flux'. Similarly, as Vasquez (2008) highlights, Tweed (2006: 61-62) has used 'sacroscares' to describe religious flows as they transform 'peoples and places, the social arena and the natural terrain'. At the same time, despite traditionally being the province of social and natural sciences (Vasquez, 2008) several scholars (see Ebaugh & Chafetz, 2002; Allievi & Nielsen, 2003; Valentine et al, 2012; 2013) have used networks to describe religiously relevant transnational 'patterns of relationships, called ties, between points called nodes' (Ebaugh & Chafetz, 2002: 165). Building on which, in this chapter I utilise the concept of social field, which Levitt and Glick-Schiller (2004: 1009) define as 'a set of interlocking networks of social relationships through which ideas, practices, and resources are exchanged, organised and transformed'.

The broad aim of this chapter takes its inspiration from Latham (2002:120) in looking to 'narrate the connections, disconnections and interdependencies' that link spatialities and temporalities...to tell clear and relevant stories...about how relationships are bound together through time and space'. More specifically, I show how missionaries live deeply transnational lives, and in doing so I heed calls within wider transnational migration literature to consider the continuing significance of 'non-migrants' to transmigrants everyday lives (Crang et al, 2003; Jackson et al, 2004; Glick-Schiller, 2005). At the same time this chapter provides a counterpoint to a trend within research on religion and transnationalism for examining familial transnational relationships, and instead provides a broader perspective to the literature, in an original context. I begin by introducing 'faith missions', and the centrality of transnationalism to their operation. In particular I look at how missionaries develop and maintain their support networks, focusing on the vast distances that they travel, and their desire to bring people 'into relationship' with Albania. Next, I trace how this wider social field manifests itself in the everyday lives of missionaries in Albania, in two different ways, using the lens of prayer and 'performance Christianity'. In the former I find that supporters 'at home' are seen as

an intrinsic part of the mission workforce, petitioning God with their prayers for change in Albania. In particular, I argue that Evangelicals' conception of a transcendent God enables supporters' prayers to bypass the constraints of space/time in order to play an active role in reinforcing the work of the missionaries abroad. In the latter, I examine how technology has facilitated the easy exchange of information between missionaries and their supporters, leading to a rise in what one participant called 'performance Christianity'. Unpacking this, I find that while technological advancements have afforded supporters a larger window onto missionary life, what they see is to an extent curated. Looking at two mediums, Facebook and electronic prayer letters, I show how some participants came to modify their output, presenting aspects of their life that fit what they perceive as supporters' ideals about 'the good missionary'. Running contrary to normative accounts wherein 'proximity is felt to be obligatory, appropriate or desirable' (Urry, 2002: 258) therefore, I signal the productivity of spatial distance in maintaining 'proximal' transnational relationships.

Motor Homes, Mobile Homes: Building the Mission Supporter Network

The vast majority of the missionaries in this study are part of 'faith missions'. Often traced back to the nineteenth-century Evangelical Awakening, and closely linked to the work of Hudson Taylor and the China Inland Mission (see Fiedler, 1994), one of the fundamental tenets of this movement is that missionaries are supported solely by voluntary contributions received from supporting churches and friends. Rather than rely on a set salary from an organisation or one church, they are expected to live by faith that God will provide the financial means for the continuation of their mission. While in their purest form 'faith missions' are not meant to solicit funds, in reality I found missionaries were engaged in geographically widespread purposive fundraising. In this sense faith that God will provide was combined with practical action. The result are geographically widespread networks of churches and individuals, which as I discuss in this section, provide the means that enable missionaries to move to, and live in Albania.

Before moving from America to Tirana as a missionary, Valerie had been in charge of the mission activities of her church. Talking about changes in the operationalisation of contemporary mission, she explained, 'In the early years of missions, even hundreds of years ago, the churches or denominations or the mission board sent them out. But now most of us are supported by individuals and more than one church.' Indeed, while some still think about mission in terms of centrally organised Catholic and Protestant projects, these missionaries spoke to a form of mission activity wherein individuals create their own networks of supporters. To achieve this, I found that missionaries typically began by contacting their family, friends, and those within their own church for donations. This was the case for one young missionary couple, Naomi and Cole, who were able to use family connections with 'wealthy people who are also believers' to secure the majority of their financing. This situation was however unusual, and instead an alternative scenario that Naomi proposed was far more typical of the missionaries that I met: 'I think a lot of people have long supporter lists. A combination of individual churches giving small percentages and then just long lists of people who give \$20 a month, you know, something like that.'

This was the case for Adam, an American missionary who moved to Tirana with his family. Looking further afield than his own Christian community, Adam set about contacting churches across America in search of donations. More often than not this led to an invitation to speak at a church, and to introduce himself, his family, and their work, to the congregants. Kara, meanwhile, is a 14 year old girl, and the daughter of a missionary pastor in Tirana. For both, fundraising involved physically leaving their home towns, and undergoing extended periods of travel. Moreover, foreshadowing the following chapter's focus on the missionary home in Albania, participants often had to practice 'home-making' on the road, staying in motor homes, mobile homes, in hotels and as guests of fellow believers. Talking about their experiences of fundraising, Adam and Kara shared with me:

Interview with Adam

When I was a kid, we were getting ready to go to Australia, ok? For two years, our family travelled in a 23-and-a-half foot caravan. There was my mum, my dad, three kids, two chihuahuas. My dad spoke in 210 different churches. I don't even know how many states, but I've been to 45 of the 50 states in the US, or 46 at my last count. Basically, coast to coast twice in the US. To raise the support to go. Out of those 210 that my dad preached in about a 100 churches and, or, families supported us. Our story, in raising support to come here, we went everywhere from the extreme south tip of Florida – I spoke in a church down in the Everglades, I spoke in a church in upstate New York, I spoke in churches in Washington State, and lots of churches in Tennessee, Indiana, a couple in Illinois, we've got two churches out in Arizona that support us. And lots of places inbetween. New Mexico. I mean, you name it.

Interview with Kara

Just for the sake of you having pity on me which sounds really strange [laughter], this last summer our train of states, and it's err, these were the states that we actually stayed overnight in [pause] And, and in some of the states we stayed in multiple different houses: Oklahoma, Kansas, Louisiana, Texas, Illinois. No. I missed Arkansas. [laughter] Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Illinois, Minnesota, Montana, Idaho, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Colorado, Oklahoma.

In the two extracts above Adam and Kara describe the vast distances that they and their family each covered during one period of fundraising. Traversing large stretches of the United States, they stopped in location after location in pursuit of support. With each meeting another church, or individual, potentially pledged to give either a one-off donation, or make a monthly commitment to supporting their mission to Albania. Subsequently their network of supporters, and the wider social field which they

comprised, expanded as missionaries travelled, pulling in further people and churches across America. This model of fundraising was common amongst the missionaries I met, across the nationalities, with the fundraising period(s) lasting anywhere between a few months and four years. In part this depended on whether money was being raised for a single missionary or a family, and if further funds were required for a pension, retirement, or travel fund. Clearly their 'success rate', a point which I will expand upon later, also played an important factor.

Indeed, despite the large distances that missionaries covered to meet with churches and individuals, a donation was never guaranteed. Lindsey and Jason, for example, decided to hire a van, and lived in it for one year as they motored with their family across America. During one particular journey they undertook the long drive from Texas to California, by way of Arizona. Unfortunately only one church out of several along the route agreed to contribute, and in this case it was a small one-off 'love offering'. Talking about the experience, Lindsey shared the importance of faith during the fundraising process, and holding on to the belief that God will supply the finance needed,

'when we first gave our hearts to missions and decided that this is the route that we are going to take, it was kind of like stepping on a cloud. Who is going to support us? Where is the money going to come from? How are we going to feed our children? And I kind of went through a process mentally and with God, and it was as if God said, Lindsey everything you have is from me. Your husband's job, your job, everything you have is from me.'

The expansion of their supporter networks was therefore not a foregone conclusion. Rather, what was constant was the need for an unwavering faith in God's provision. At the same time however, missionaries did stress that how missionaries presented themselves could be instrumental to securing funds. Consequently, since the majority were not able to sign up enough supporters simply by making phone calls, or writing letters, the act of fundraising became a highly personal endeavour. In order to solicit funds it was normal, for example, for missionaries to give presentations to churches, as

Adam did. Other times 'Albania evenings' were arranged where people were invited to learn more about the country in a more informal way, over a meal. Further novel approaches included designing and giving out fridge magnets with a picture of Albania, or an inspirational quote regarding their mission. Here missionaries were selling themselves, and their product: Albania. As Adam explained, 'there is a certain amount of sales and marketing that's involved in missions. You're marketing yourself and you're marketing your country as something that's worth-while'. As a result, in a religious marketplace where countless missionaries are vying for the money of fellow Christians across America, impressions counted. Indeed, as Hovland (2009: 141) found in her own research with the Norwegian Mission Society, missionaries can be 'held up as examples - as personified 'adverts', if you will - for the mission'. It was therefore essential for missionaries to capture the attention of their audience with both a demonstration of their credibility as a missionary, and stories of Albania itself.

The importance of presentation is further underlined in a recent study by Krause (2011), who looked at the work of Christian Church Outreach Mission International (CCOMI), which is a church founded by Ghanaians in Hamburg. In her study she asked when and how transnational competencies can be described as cosmopolitan sociabilities. As part of this research, she found a paradoxical situation wherein a branch of CCOMI, based in an extremely poor suburb of the cosmopolitan city Accra, was actually less internationally connected than a branch in the north of Ghana, where the majority of members did not even own a mobile phone. The reason for this was that the northern branch was depicted to be in an area where Muslims predominated, and consequently it 'scored higher for the church's engagement in development activities and donations made to them' (Krause, 2011: 426). Correspondingly, as I found in Chapter Five, Albania is at times similarly positioned as a Muslim stronghold, and it is for this reason that many Evangelicals are interested in contributing to mission work in the country. Aware of this, missionaries told me that they sometimes purposely stressed the history of Islam in Albania in their presentations. Indeed, the hooks of Islam and Communism were seen as useful tools to pique an audience's interest, secure donations, and extend their network of supporters.

At the same time as 'getting [Albania] on people's radar screens' (Tristan) in order to secure funds, missionaries also spoke of their desire to involve ordinary church-goers in the mission enterprise in a more intimate way. Felicity, a 35 year old missionary teacher, explained that:

'God calls us all to be a part of the great commission. And some people can go and some people can't go, and I can go. So you know, it's a privilege for them to be a part of what's going on in Albania, when they're in the middle of some small town in a small state in the US. They get to know these people. Every time I go back to the States, they ask me about people, by name, like, "How's this situation? What's going on in this place?" I mean, they feel like they're actually involved in my ministry....I could not be in Albania without them, and they wouldn't be in Albania without me. It's a team thing'.

In this extract Felicity talks about her supporters as if they are part of team. Rather than simply providing anonymous cash donations, they are envisaged as actively engaged with the mission, and wanting to be kept up to date with developments. In this example Felicity mentions her visits back to the States on furlough³² as key times when information, such as conversion stories, are exchanged. I also found however that 'prayer letters' were a fundamental tool in maintaining relationships with supporters, and drawing them deeper into a transnational relationship with the mission. Whereas in earlier years missionaries sent these by postal letter, often taking months to arrive, today they are distributed by email on a weekly to monthly basis. This change in pace means that supporters anywhere in the world can be instantly updated, and therefore feel intimately involved in unfolding events in Albania. Consequently, 'just as London Missionary Society founder William Carey wrote in 1792 that the invention of the mariners' compass was key to the rising missionary movement, this is no less the case than at present with email [and] the internet' (Wuthnow & Offut, 2008: 212). Popping up in a supporter's inbox, two pages of a word document include prayer requests,

³² Furlough or Home Assignment refers to time spent in a missionary's 'sending country', reporting to their mission organisation, visiting and recruiting supporters and funding.

stories of when they shared Christ, and news about family life, or a personal situation. Through this medium therefore supporters become implicated in a personal relationship not only with the missionary in question, but with those that they engage with. Much as in Bornstein's (2001; 2005a; 2005b) work on World Vision child sponsorship programmes, by contributing donations (or prayer, as I discuss in the following section) supporters are consequently drawn into a relationship of sorts with missionaries, and provided vibrant stories of Albanian landscapes they have not visited, and people they had not met. These prayer letters, which I examine further in the following section, formed the basic fabric of the missionary-supporter relationship, and fuelled an 'extensive transnational network of world evangelism' (Han, 2005: 21).

In this section I examined how the transnational mission networks that enable missionaries to live in Albania are created and maintained. I found, first, that missionaries typically have to travel vast distances in order to meet with and present themselves and their work to potential supporters. Second, I argued that to a degree the marketing of themselves as missionaries, and Albania as mission destination, was deemed to be important for recruitment. Third, at a more intimate level, prayer letters formed the glue between missionaries and their supporters, as I explore further in the following sections.

Prayer: 'You Can Change the World'

Prayer has long been central to the lives of Christians, and is practiced by Evangelicals worldwide on a daily basis. The missionaries in this study were no exception, using it as a medium through which to talk to, and be in relationship with, God. Within academia prayer has received only limited attention, with the majority of studies emerging from the field of psychology (Francis & Evans, 1995; Francis & Astley, 2001; Kaldor et al, 2002; Spilka, 2005; Hall, 2012). In a review of literature on prayer in 1985 for example, Malony and Newton identified four categories of research: developmental studies of conceptions of prayer, research on motivation for praying, studies of the effects of

verbal prayer, and studies of the effects of contemplative prayer. Contemporary studies have followed similar themes, although several studies have also recently pooled around the role of spirituality and prayer in sport (Watson & Nesti, 2005; Watson & Czech, 2005; Czech & Bullet, 2007; Hoffman, 2010). In this section however, I take a different tack, and apply a geographical lens to prayer. In particular, I examine how missionaries relay prayer requests to their supporter network, and how prayer is used by not only missionaries, but also their supporters to petition God to enact change in Albania. I find that through the transmission of targeted information, a transnational mission network of supporters is mobilised into prayer, believing that their communication with God can have a tangible impact on the lives of both missionaries, and the people with whom they are trying to share the Gospel.

In a recent paper looking at the religious background to contemporary geopolitical claims made by the Bush administration, Wallace (2006: 215) made the astute observation that Evangelicals 'speak of a God who is not a philosophical abstraction but an agent historically and geographically engaged with man-kind'. Indeed, the missionaries in this study talked about a God that is intimately involved in their everyday lives, and who works in the lives of others around them. In particular, prayer was seen as a way to communicate to God not only thanks and praise, but also desires, dreams and requests. Amy, for example, spoke of her hope that an appropriate opportunity would arise for her to 'witness to' a lady that she often saw on her walk to the market. While moving through the streets of Tirana she would talk to God, praying that He would provide a way for this to happen. Indeed, the missionaries saw God as active in even the smallest of details. When I asked Emma to tell me more about prayer so that I could understand it better, she set out with the following,

'In the Bible when Christ tells people to pray or whatever, one of the things He talked about was to pray about what the will of God is, and to pray for God's will to be done. And I do believe that there is, when people pray, if they pray in accordance to what God's wanting, I don't know, I just know it makes a difference [silence]. I think if God wants people to be a part of

what He is doing He honours the fact that people want to be part of that...God doesn't need for us to make something work for Him, but when people pray He does move to fulfill those prayers'.

Here Emma explains that peoples' prayers make a difference to what God does in the world. Put more simply by another participant, 'I think prayer changes things. It can affect change' (Valerie). With this in mind, I found that alongside recruiting financial supporters, as I discussed in the previous section, missionaries also looked to build a network of individuals committed to praying for them and their work. Christar, for example, is an Evangelical mission organisation that 'exists to glorify God by establishing churches amongst least-reached Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims and other Asians worldwide'.³³ During my fieldwork I interviewed nine of their missionaries in Albania, and found that Christar had required them to recruit 100 'prayer partners' before they were allowed to go to the field. These were people who had committed to praying for them daily. 100 seems like a very large number, yet it is indicative of the high value that is placed on prayer. When I specifically asked missionaries about prayer, I heard time and time again that it is just as, if not more, valuable than the money they receive. For some, knowing that they were in other Christians' prayers led to a 'sense of peace and purpose' (see Jones, 1998; Francis & Kaldor, 2002; Ferguson, 2010 for studies on prayer and comfort), while for others it was a source of excitement and inspiration. Donald, for example, told me of his joy at 'imagining all of the people in this world that are praying all at this very moment in time. The number of people that are praying right at this very minute, we don't know what they're praying for, we don't know how their prayers can really be... [but] that's mind-blowing, to be honest.'

The children's version of the popular prayer guide *Operation World* (Johnstone et al., 2001; Mandryk, 2010), is entitled *You Can Change the World: Learning to Pray for People Around the World* (Johnstone, J 1993). Much like the adult version, each country's prayer needs are listed on a dedicated page. The 1993 edition was set to go

³³ See <http://www.christar.org/DNA.html#> [Accessed 15th July 2011]

to press when a radical alteration was needed to Albania's information. In an article on the power of prayer, the author's husband explained that:

'At our mission headquarters in England there was a group of praying children who interceded for each country or people as Jill completed each chapter. The children took on their hearts the need of the children of Albania where the Gospel was banned with no known believers. They prayed for religious freedom to come to that land. A few months later the Communist government fell, and freedom for worship and witness came. Jill had to rewrite the chapter. When these children heard of the answer to their prayers, they were delighted. One of them shouted out, 'We have changed Albania!' (Johnstone, 1998: 172).

That these children had not been in Albania when this happened, or had never even visited the country, did not matter to the outcome. Instead, through prayer they believed that they had played an active role in bringing an end to Communism in Albania, and the revival of religious freedom. This bypassing of space and time was a common theme across my fieldwork, as missionaries frequently cited how through prayer Christians were able to sidestep geographic limitations. This reflected their conception of a transcendent God, who as Felicity explained 'is everywhere, He's everywhere at the same time. Just because you live in the U.S doesn't mean that God can't hear your prayer and do something in Albania, because He's everywhere. You know, like, we can all pray at the same time, and He's listening to all of us at the same time. So it's not depending on place, or location' (Felicity). Viewed through this lens, prayer is therefore an extremely powerful tool in the pursuit of world evangelisation. Indeed, during an interview with a missionary doctor, this point was further illustrated by his adding that not only did geography not stand in the way of somebody facilitating change elsewhere in the world, but that anyone, no matter what age or health could contribute. This point is depicted in a vignette that he shared with me about an elderly lady. She resides in a care home in a town that Brian used to visit as part of his doctorly duties, and was a common motif in our conversations together:

'We are part of something much bigger and ubiquitous than any of us appreciate. And it's going to be that old lady that nobody even knows about who is going to be the hero in the Kingdom of God. 'Cause God woke her up with her sleep problems in the middle in the night, and she prayed, God, I don't know what you need me to pray about but I will pray, and you need prayer, I don't know why, maybe somewhere else a Christian is facing a challenge, and at that moment He makes a decision that has implications for families and generations....God has chosen to work through and with mankind. And God has shown himself to be influenced by our prayers, and to involve us when we pray. So that lady with the heart that God gave her is talking to the director. Saying Father, have you considered this thing? I'm worried, I'm thinking. And God says, yes I have my daughter. And so through His spirit he is directing things and He says I'm going to choose someone, you won't know it for many years, but I'm going to choose someone and transplant him to work on that need that you're praying for. So it's all making eye contact with the orchestra and director. It's all the maestro there, and the piccolo does a little thing, and he glances that way and he points there. That's the reality, that's what's really real in the world.'

Here Brian stresses the significance of this elderly lady's prayers. Despite having limited mobility her communication with God is presented as influential in God's decisions, giving rise to consequences that will affect 'generations' of people. The process behind which is likened to the way in which an orchestra plays a symphony, for example. God is the maestro, setting the tempo and the direction of the piece, directing and working in partnership his musicians. In this case, missionary supporters across the world.

Indeed, in recent years there have been calls for 'more encompassing notions of transnationality including those who are not themselves transmigrants' (Jackson et al, 2004:13; see Crang et al.2003). As Crang et al (2003: 441) demonstrate through their focus on commodity culture, for instance, transnationality is 'a multidimensional space

that is multiply inhabited'. Here, we see how missionary supporters 'at home' become part of this 'multiply inhabited' space, as they offer up prayers to God. In the previous example the elderly lady prayed without any precise detail of what she should be praying for. Yet as I introduced in the previous section, missionaries typically tried to send out prayer letters on a regular basis, allowing their supporters to keep up to date with developments, and to tailor their prayers. Courtney for example produces a monthly electronic calender, which she fills in with prayer requests. Overleaf, for example, is one of the electronic diaries that Courtney sent out for April 2011 (Figure 6.1 Below and Overleaf³⁴). It features detailed information about events that supporters can praise God for, people who are in need of prayer, and more general requests for prayer as the Albanians Courtney works with, both shy away from and express interest in, 'spiritual things'.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Praise God for the great visit that Lucy, Elda & I had with former patient "K's" family last month & for the clear open door to challenge them with the truth of scripture!	Pray for Claire (a pediatric resident) who is flying in today for a 3 week rotation with ABC. Pray that her time here might be beneficial both to her and to us as a Health Foundation.	I have taken over the Bible lesson teaching each week at our Mom & Toddlers group. Pray for HIS words from my mouth each week as I share.	Pray for our neighborhood ladies' Bible study – for Lucy as she teaches & for growth in the lives of Kenna, Lonika, Flutura, Evis, Erdi, Lisa, & Ardita.	Tonight I am going to restart attending our Thurs eve Bible & prayer mtg in Shkoze. (I haven't gone since my surgery). Praise God for this faithful group who meets each week to pray!	Pray as ABC Family Health Center continues to wait for permission to be a registered vaccination center . This could help our income & patient flow significantly.	Praise God with me that I am feeling so much better – more energy, eating better, back to a normal schedule, sleeping well, & encouraged! Thank you all SO much for your faithful prayers for my body

³⁴ All the names have been changed.

8	9	10	11	12	13	14
HE IS RISEN!!! Praise God for the amazing gift of Jesus resurrected! Pray for Light of the World church as we have a special service & invite many guests from the community to hear the Good News!	Pray for many of my teammates who will take language assessment s during this next month. Pray for amazing progress, great results, & encourage ment for each of them during this hard stage of ministry.	Continue to pray for the ladies who come to our Mom's group each week: Endrita & Kristi as they show much interest in spiritual things, & she seems to have less & less interest. Pray the others in the group as well.	Pray for the final year medical student trainings that ABC holds each week this spring. Pray for our doctors as they teach these students both holistic & quality medical practices in a hands-on setting.	Pray today as Lule & I teach about healthy teeth to a group of Roma children that a teammate is working with. Pray that these kids would continue to show interest in learning about the Bible.	Our teaching at the prison last month got postponed until today. Pray as Lule & I spend some time this morning teaching in the women's prison.	Join our Christar team as we meet together today for our Day of Prayer – lifting up each other and the many ministries we are involved in here. Pray with us for continued fruit!

Figure 6.1: Excerpt from Courtney's Prayer Letter Diary

Explaining her rationale for producing these detailed prayer planners, she shared with me:

'I found that my commitment to keeping people up to date makes it a lot easier for people to invest. Because they know the people that I'm ministering to, they know what's going on, they don't forget, it's like, right there in the front of their minds all the time, and sending out a monthly prayer calendar gives people something to pray for every day and they are invested in the lives of the people that I'm invested in here and it makes it a lot easier to get through' (Courtney).

Indeed, several missionaries spoke of how praying for Albania had become woven into the everyday fabric of the their supporters' lives. One told me of a family who sat down round the kitchen table and prayed together, and how this had become the focal point of their mornings. Another shared with me about a supporter who had been so inspired by praying for, and hearing about, change in Albania, that they decided to become a missionary themselves.

'...for people who are following what is happening here, and following the ministry that I'm involved in and following what I'm doing. When they see God answer something that they were praying for, it's like, "Oh wow, God is working there and I was just a part of them because I was committed to praying for that. And I am giving money so that she can be there, so this person will learn about this and will be touched and their life will be changed." So I think it's a huge impact. I think it impacts people in a way that—especially people who can't go, people who it's just impossible for them to be overseas, which is a lot of people. This is their way of being involved in the bigger picture and what that's doing. For some people it's really easy to just say, "Here's your one-time donation, I don't really care if I get you updates or not, this is my part." But I think the people who are really wanting to invest, are reading my updates and are giving on a regular basis and are involved in a more than just material level' (Courtney).

In this section I uncovered how supporters outside of Albania are active members of a transnational network of prayer. Using targeted information conveyed in prayer letters, these supporters believe that they have an active role to play in creating tangible changes in Albania by petitioning God through prayer. Here geographical distance is of little consequence, as prayers to God, who 'is everywhere, He's everywhere at the same time' (Felicity) transcend space/time. In this way supporters across the world become intertwined with Albania's trajectory, eagerly following and campaigning for religious change. In the following section however, I move to consider the role of technology in maintaining these supporter networks, and look more specifically at what a participant called 'performance Christianity'. In doing so I emphasise that while the transformative potential of prayer has no geographical boundaries, prayer itself is still undertaken by a network of people, each with their own expectations and ideals regarding missionary life. As a result, and as I discuss further in the following section, geography comes to the fore once more, and becomes key to missionaries' transnational social relations.

Performance Christianity: Seafood Spaghetti, Lemons and Coffee Machines

Fieldnotes, AEP Regional Meeting, May 11th 2011

Mark was invited to come to the front, and to deliver a message to the audience. He began, 'today I want to start by sharing something from Romans 12:9, which talks about how love should be sincere. In some other languages though, like in Albanian, it can be translated as we must not be hypocritical. And it's the same name for actors in the theatre, they were called hypocrites. They had a mask they put on and acted in. Love doesn't put on a mask. But we all tend to put one on, to walk around as hypocrites, but Paul says be sincere, take off your masks....I just want to encourage you to reflect on that....Maybe in this time you've thought about a mask that you have put on, to be a 'good person', a 'good Christian', a 'good missionary'.

Hundreds of missionaries had gathered in a popular church in the centre of Tirana for the AEP regional meeting, seated uniformly in row after row of chairs. I myself was nervous, waiting to give a speech about my research, and to issue an invitation for people to take part. Trying to put my own emotion aside, I listened closely to Mark's words, not then realising that his focus on 'masks' foreshadowed one of the major themes to emerge from my research around missionary ideals. Drawing this out in the following section (and again in Chapter Seven), I examine the perceived disjuncture between supporters' ideals around the 'good missionary', and aspects of contemporary mission life. More specifically, I begin by showing how technology has thickened the transnational social relationships between missionaries and their supporters by facilitating the increased exchange of information. This communication far from unidirectional, rather supporters are increasingly able to pass comment, or even judgment through the same mediums. At the same time, technological advancements mean that missionaries' lives do not look like those of the past, yet the missionaries in this study felt that their supporters' picture of contemporary missionary life in the field had yet to catch up. Drawing on vignettes from missionaries' use of Facebook and

prayer Letters, I find that in order to keep their funding there is a tendency for missionaries to adopt a form of 'performance Christianity', at times wearing a 'mask', and censoring what they include in their communication with supporters. Outdated ideals of what constitutes a 'good missionary' continue therefore, to be perpetuated through transnational supporter networks. Consequently, I find that while transnational accounts have typically celebrated the growing proximity afforded by technological advancements, this case demonstrates that spatial distance is not necessarily undesirable, and can actually play an important role in maintaining the status quo of 'proximal' transnational relationships.

Frontier Missions and Facebook

The 'frontier missions' of the nineteenth century produced countless biographies and non-fiction books around the archetypal figure of the missionary. Within these pages missionaries were depicted as fearless heroes who undertook long voyages to distant and exotic lands. They took with them only as much as they could carry, and were not expected to ever return to their homeland. Instead, any contact that they had with the friends or family that they left behind was by postal mail, which could take anywhere between several months and years to arrive. The watchwords of these missions were sacrifice and suffering. Despite this era of mission unfurling two centuries previous however, contemporary missionaries feel that they are still 'put on a pedestal' (Felicity) and expected to live in the same way. Yet following advancements in technology, missionaries no longer have to travel for months in order to reach their destination. Instead they are able to travel vast distances quickly thanks to developments in aviation. They do not have to use 'snail mail' to communicate with friends, family and supporters, choosing instead to share news in 'real time' using the internet. And they can enjoy some 'home comforts' given the worldwide expansion in export-import trade. In fact, it would be rather difficult for today's missionaries to emulate the style of their forefathers given such advancements in technology. As Steve Moore, president and CEO of the Mission Exchange asserted in a recent interview, 'technology is [therefore]

changing...the opportunities...associated with missionary life'³⁵. At the same time however, he also underlines the '*expectations*' [author's emphasis added] that have accompanied these changes. The internet, for example, means that missionaries are able to instantly send detailed prayer letters, photos, or videos. They can post things on Facebook, and even talk to their supporters in real time using programmes such as Skype. In other words, they are more connected than ever before, affording supporters an ever wider window on their lives in Albania. And yet despite this virtual proximity, one missionary explained to me, 'I think it's funny because we've got all those great missionaries that had three, four month journeys to missionary life, and we have that in our heads. And we know that the churches still have that in their heads. We perceive that's what they're thinking of, so we then think about it. But that's not missionary life today, but somehow it's still floating around.' (Theresa).

Later in the fieldwork, sitting on a concrete veranda that looked out to sea, I began to better understand some of the dynamics that lay behind Theresa's observation. I was with two Evangelical missionaries, Sabrina and Ryan. Enjoying each others company, we shared a meal of spaghetti brimming with squid, prawns and mussels at a restaurant. During a more formal interview earlier in the day they had mentioned this restaurant to me as one of their favourites, given its outlook, delicious food, and reasonable prices. At the same time, as we had sat in the summer sunshine at a cafe near their home, Sabrina shared with me that this same bowl of seafood spaghetti had come to take on heightened significance for one of their supporters. Setting the scene, Sabrina began, 'some of our friends were here and we took them out to eat by the sea, and they had the seafood with spaghetti. We were sitting out, and there was a beautiful sunset'. Enjoying the moment they had decided to have a photograph taken, and it was put up on Facebook as a happy memento of their friends visit. Later however, Sabrina saw that someone had posted 'the innocent comment, suffering for Jesus' under the photo and:

³⁵ <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2011/januaryweb-only/61-41.0.html> [Accessed 15th July 2011]

'it just hit me because I said, you know, they could either mean that in, in you know, just a joke or it can be, you're getting way too much support that you're able to go out to eat, and you're in this beautiful place that you're not really suffering at all, you know, you're not sacrificing. That you shouldn't be allowed to be at this beautiful place in this nice restaurant. It's just, I was like, I need to think about what I say, and how I think about things, because some people think you should be suffering. And if you aren't suffering then you are not really a Missionary and you are not doing a good job.'

Just as Mark had drawn on the image of the 'good missionary' in his speech, and Theresa felt that comparisons were made between today's missionaries, and those of the past, Sabrina alluded to a sense of being scrutinized against a set ideals of what a missionary should and shouldn't do. In this example Sabrina felt that she was being told through the medium of Facebook that a 'real' missionary should not eat out; a 'real' missionary should not be in a beautiful location; a 'real' missionary should sacrifice things; and a 'real' missionary should be suffering. As the research progressed I found that this missionary's experience was not an isolated event, but instead spoke to a widespread phenomenon.

When they first arrived in Albania, Alice, her husband and two children had entered on a tourist visa. This only permitted them to stay for 90 days before they had to leave, and then enter again. Unfortunately their application for a residency permit had taken them past this 90 day deadline, and so they were forced to travel outside Albania's borders. Deciding to try and view this development positively, they spent a long weekend in Athens before returning to continue with their application. To update her friends and supporters Alice put up some pictures of their trip on Facebook, showing the family enjoying Athens' major sights. Similar to Sabrina's experience, Alice received the comment 'All play and no work?' from one of their supporters, posted underneath a photo of them at the Acropolis. Trying to downplay the jibe Alice replied 'You know, life gave us lemons, so we made lemonade'. This exchange did however lead Alice to

reassess what they shared on Facebook, and she asked her husband not to put up pictures so much. While she did not feel that they had done anything wrong by going to Athens, Alice had become more aware of how things can look, and be interpreted. Her reaction was therefore to start censoring what they shared, considering how it might appear to their supporters back in America.

Prayer Letters

Just as some missionaries were wary about their use of Facebook, electronic prayer letters were also contested mediums. Decisions about what to include, and what not to include, revealed what one missionary called a kind of 'performance Christianity'. She told me its 'where you act, and show, and everything on the outside is what everyone expects of you'. Prayer letters were key sites for this since they are the most prolific medium used by missionaries to communicate with their audience. Since the possibility of supporters' withdrawing funding often loomed large, and in some cases became a reality, producing a pleasing 'script' was an essential part of the missionary performance. While some missionaries found that their supporters were interested in hearing about family life, and the difficulties of being a missionary abroad, others noted a hunger amongst their supporters for stories about 'lives changed'. Over a cup of coffee for example, Alice told me a story about an elderly lady that is one of her family's biggest financial supporters. With a grin she painted a picture of an eccentric but inspirational woman whose opinion she valued highly. During one meeting they had been discussing what missionaries should and shouldn't include in prayer letters. Recounting her supporter's reaction Alice shared,

'...she's like, "We don't care about when Evie lost her tooth." You know? like some people have in their prayer letter like, The Home Corner: What's Going on with Us at Home. She's like, "We don't care. We're giving this much money every month, and we want to hear about people's lives being changed. So include like, I had a meeting with this kid, and this is what

happened. Like, every single prayer letter include a name of someone you met with and what happened.'

Here we see a supporter who is concerned with learning how her money is being spent, above and beyond stories of a missionary's personal life. While missionaries understood such reasoning, and were keen to demonstrate the fruits of their work, at times this manifested itself as a pressure to 'perform'. Ian had been working with a denominational church in the US that received his electronic prayer letters and updates. Every few months they would ask him 'how many? How many people have been saved?' This led to frustration since, as he explained during an interview, 'you can't measure souls, but...they've got to put in their magazine, Ian has led 100 people to Christ or something'. Feeding in to this, Naomi admitted that 'there's always a tendency or a temptation to describe things in a more attractive light than maybe what's actually going on, because you want people to think that you're doing a good job, and that they made a good decision to support you'.

In a similar vein, conversation with Lindsey and Jason turned to their hesitation over including particular pieces of information within their prayer letters. For example, Lindsey had recently bought a coffee machine so that the family could enjoy the drink at home. She explained to me that in the long-term they would be able to save money on this staple, since having access to good coffee at home would cut down on their expenditure buying it on the street. Yet the couple felt uncomfortable about sharing news of this purchase, not because they thought it was uninteresting or irrelevant, but rather because of how it might be perceived. Lindsey explained,

L: Well I think that you have to be careful with what you communicate to others because they might get the wrong impression. Like I like espresso coffee so I bought a coffee maker, but I'm not going to put that in my prayer letter because they're going to think

J: [interrupts] What's a missionary doing with a coffee machine?

The tone of Jason's interruption was accusatory, and communicated a form of judgment. Just as Sabrina and Ryan had met with derision over their expensive looking seafood pasta, and Alice was questioned over the decision to take a holiday to Athens, Lindsey and Jason were wary of a negative response to their buying a coffee machine. As a result, just like these other missionaries, they too were conscious of what they communicated online, and thought carefully about what they shared. Pictures and impressions of missionary life, as transmitted to supporters through Facebook and prayer letters, were therefore partial and carefully selected portraits.

Is A Re-Education Necessary?

In the previous two sections I introduced several vignettes around missionaries' use of two mediums, Facebook and electronic prayer letters. I found that missionaries sometimes felt judged against ideals of what constitutes the 'good' or 'real' missionary, and established that as a result there was a tendency to carefully craft communication with their supporters. What is particularly significant about this however, is how spatial distance allowed these missionaries to withhold particular information. Indeed, whereas much of the transnational literature has celebrated how 'here' and 'there' have been increasingly connected through developments in technology, for the missionaries in this study spatial distance was actually productive. It allowed them to pick and choose what they communicate, and in doing so to try and live up to what they believe supporters expect of them. In this case the 'tired refrain that distance no longer matters' (Samers, 2010: 39) is not only called into question therefore, but clearly overturned. Moreover, unlike within literature around transnational families, spatial distance does not necessarily have a negative impact on 'the ability of transmigrants to conduct, successfully, certain activities and maintain intimate relationships' (Featherstone et al., 2007: 385), but rather helps facilitates on-going proximal social relationships with supporters.

At the same time however, feeling as if 'on a pedestal' (Felicity) was tiring for the missionaries. Moreover, for some, there was a sense of guilt and also frustration that they did not feel they could be as 'real' as they would like. Nearing the end of my fieldwork I attended the AEP's annual conference where I ran two focus groups. Interested in the disjuncture between missionaries' perceptions of supporters' expectations, and the realities of missionary life, I had begun reading missionaries' blogs on the internet, intrigued to see whether what I had found resonated beyond the Albanian context. I came across a site called *Missionary Confidential*, where missionaries were able to air their views anonymously. An article entitled 'Question Week: Is a Re-education Necessary About Missions Today?' caught my attention, and I decided to print it out and use it to prompt discussion:

Last one for Question Week:

Is a re-education necessary in churches and amongst Evangelical Christians about modern missions?

I say this because of all the odd statements I've received over the years in missions ministry. If you've read even half of this blog so far, you'll understand what I mean. From statements I've heard about missions only being valid in the 10/40 window, or enforced prayer at Christian schools for missionaries, peoples' perceptions that the missionary actually does very little, to thoughts conveyed to me that missionary living equals impoverished, yet our pastor can't be seen to live like that—I just wonder if churches are missing the boat when explaining the concept of being a missionary, especially what that means in today's world.

The article sparked lively discussion across both groups, with participants conversing about how through Facebook, Skype, prayer letters and church visits they had found their supporters had different views on what it meant to be a contemporary missionary, compared to what their missionary lives actually looked like. At the same time, Joseph,

an American missionary and father of two, made the insightful comment that:

'we're part of the process for helping the supporting churches know what life is really like. The information that we send them is their perception, and is their reality'.

Expanding on this further, Harold, a British missionary, shared with the focus group:

'I'm conscious of those expectations, I'm linked with a number of churches in the UK and I go back every three years to speak with them. But right at the beginning, I took a photograph from further round the bay, looking at this glorious scenery with the mountains and everything else. And I said, "You think missionaries all have to work in a hard place. That's where I work." Because I think we can sometimes perpetuate that idea that people have, because especially when we're new to the mission field, we pick out all the hard things. I did the same. We don't have water, we don't have electricity, all the rest of it. And I overdid it with my own family because my daughters were petrified about poor old dad. Now, in actual fact I'd really tried not to, but until my daughter came and saw how pleasant it was there, you know, she'd believe me that it wasn't really as bad. So I'd inadvertently perhaps increased that impression it ought to be a bad place. That was corrected. But then I made a clear point of saying, "Get this picture out of your mind." Because that's not what it's about. So we can sometimes perpetuate the problem for ourselves I think.'

Harold's determination to dispel the idea that missionaries have to work in a 'hard place' was applauded by the rest of the focus group. Indeed, his decision to take the photo and show it to his church was interpreted as both brave, and necessary. The missionaries in this study did not willfully lie to their supporters, and nor did they try and create a wholly false picture of their lives. Rather there was a sense of fear that the realities of modern missionary life simply did not live up to the expectations of some their supporters, who maintained particular ideals of the 'good' missionary from the

pages of missionary heroes' biographies. At the same time however, there was a recognition that they themselves were responsible for helping supporters understand 'what life is really like', and that perhaps they needed to take a step of faith, and re-educate their supporters about the realities of modern missionary life.

Concluding Remarks

In this chapter I have examined missionaries' transnational social relations, uncovering how they develop and maintain their supporter networks, and in turn how this transnational social field manifests itself in the everyday lives of missionaries in Albania. In particular I have shown how supporters are part of an important transnational network of prayer, catalysed through 'prayer letters'. I found that Evangelicals' conception of a transcendent God enables supporters' prayers to bypass the constraints of space/time in order to play an active role in reinforcing the work of the missionaries abroad. Consequently I argued that supporters 'at home' are seen as an intrinsic part of the mission work force, petitioning God with their prayers for change in Albania. Next, I turned to further consider the role of the internet in missionaries' communications with their supporters, and, using vignettes from missionaries' experiences of using Facebook and electronic Prayer Letters, identified a form of 'performance Christianity'. Unpacking this, I demonstrated how whilst prayer renders geography obsolete, spatial distance allowed some missionaries to curate the representation of their lives, crafting communication that would not fall short of what they perceived to be supporters' unrealistic ideals around the 'good missionary'. This finding, I have contended, runs contrary to accounts of proximity/distance within transnational literature, and signals the productivity of distance in maintaining 'proximal' transnational relationships.

**Contextualisation and the Missionary Home: Between Contested Ideals
and Lived Realities**

This thesis is broadly interested in the geographical trajectories of Evangelical missionaries as they migrate to, and embed in, Albania. In the previous chapters I examined missionaries' decision to migrate, their choice of destination, and some of the ways in which the transnational social relations that enabled them to move to Albania, are also manifest in their day to day lives. This chapter is grounded within the missionary home, and considers its construction and maintenance in light of the perceived ideals and realities of mission, and how these are experienced and negotiated. Despite being 'a cornerstone of missionary thinking, [the home] has been ignored in virtually all studies of mission theology' (Roberts, 2008b: 165) to date. Indeed, as Roberts (2008b: 135) points out, a review of some of the major contemporary overviews of Western mission theory reveals this startling omission (see for example Hutchinson, 1987; Yates, 1994). At the same time as scholars have failed to systematically study the place of the Christian home within the missionary enterprise however, home has become the focus of a burgeoning body of literature spread across the social sciences. This is none more so the case than in human geography, where as Chapter Two examined, the amount of research on home is rapidly increasing (See for example, seminal work by Blunt and Dowling, 2006; alongside review paper by Brickell, K, 2012). As part of this trend, scholars have shown how the home is not only gendered (Madigan et al., 1990; Gowans, 2001; Adler, 2009; Atherton, 2009; Colville, 2009; Findlay, 2009), sexualised (Johnston & Valentine, 1995; Kirby & Hay, 1997; Cowen, 2004; Gorman-Murray, 2006, 2007, 2012; Valentine, 2008; Waitt & Gorman-Murray, 2007, 2011; Hamilton, 2009; Oswin, 2010), classed (Dowling, 2009) and raced (Hooks, 1990; Collins, 1991; Hyams, 2003), but also affected by lifecourse (Fairhurst, 1999; Varley & Blasco, 2000, 2001; Beazley, 2000; Christensen et al., 2000; Varley, 2008), and disability (Oldman & Beresford, 2000; Imrie, 2004; Chouinard, 2006), highlighting the myriad identities that influence how homes are constructed and used. Yet amidst this work the relationship between religion and home has been largely silenced. In this

chapter then, I take some of the key insights from the critical geographies of home, and cross fertilize them with information gathered from life-focused interviews and semi-structured interviews, alongside ethnographic fieldnotes, to produce a fresh account of the missionary home.

More specifically I examine how missionary homes are constituted, both in the sense of 'an actual place or nodal point of social relations and lived experience', and 'as a metaphorical or discursive space of belonging and identification (Brickell, K, 2011: 27). Focusing on the former first, I begin by reviewing the limited scholarly literature available on the Christian home in the mission field. I demonstrate that while there has been some acknowledgment of the relationship between mission theory and the domestic scale, particularly concerning the colonial period (Hunter, 1984; Grimshaw, 1989; Langmore, 1989), this has not only been little developed, but there has also been no contemporary reflection on how changing missiological thought has influenced the missionary home. I address this lacuna by elucidating a shift in mission theory away from 'civilization' to today's emphasis on 'contextualisation', and make the general argument that the missionary home reflects these moves in miniature. I contend that the missionary home is, in other words, a microcosm of ideas on how mission work should be carried out in practice. This simultaneously fleshes out the concept of 'contextualisation', which will frame the intersections between mission theory and missionary homemaking that are threaded through the following sections of the chapter.

In the next section I find that there is a politics around the location of missionary homes, and their size and quality, that can be traced back to mission theories' idealisation of 'contextualisation'. Far from being a private matter, I demonstrate how missionaries' decisions around where they live, and what they live in, are mediated by the influence of three external stakeholders: the Albanians that they hope to evangelise; their supporters; and other missionaries. The material home is therefore a 'complex and contested space' (Blunt, 2003b:73). This theme is carried through to the

following section, where I downscale to examine the material design of missionaries' homes, and the possessions that they choose to include in them. Again, I find that there is contestation around the way that participants *should* design and decorate their home, as well as the 'things' that they fill it with. In this way, the construction and maintenance of the missionary home is highly political, as it is not only implicated in, but to an extent constituted by, ideals around mission theory and practice. This finding questions normative thinking about the home as a space for self-creativity, and the reflection of one's identity, and instead shows how it can become subsumed in to a wider public project. Indeed, it is the porosity of home that the chapter emphasizes in contrast to the conceptualisation of the modern home,

'not only as a line separating the inside from the outside (a house), but also as the epitome, the spatial inscription of the idea of individual freedom, a place liberated from fear and anxiety, a place supposedly untouched by social, political and natural processes, a place enjoying an autonomous and independent existence: a *home*' (Kaika, 2004: 266, emphasis in original).

I argue therefore that missionaries have less autonomy over the home than wider literature on home-making practices at the present time might also suggest.

At the same time however, and more strongly than when thinking about the location of their homes, or their size, some missionaries' decisions around interior design and the inclusion of particular personal possessions spoke to a longing for 'a metaphorical or discursive space of belonging and identification' (Brickell, K, 2011: 27). Indeed, it has long been accepted that the concept of 'home' is far more than a synonym for the architectural thing called a 'house'. For having left their old homes and moved to a new and alien environment, some participants spoke of a desire for the familiar, and the recreation of past home environments. While this went against the 'contextualisation' ideal, it was framed by a number of participants as being an emotional necessity, given that they were constantly aware that they would never fully belong in Albania (see Chapman & Hockey, 1999 on ideals versus lived realities of home). Indeed, despite

attempts to blend in and to 'contextualise' themselves, it was rare that missionaries felt that they belonged in Albania, as their teleological efforts to 'fit in' did not always satisfy their subjective longing to belong (see Ralph & Staeheli, 2011: 524). Debates around material culture therefore spoke to not only mission theory, but also missionary migrants' personal experiences of making home.

While for some missionaries it was important to construct their home in Albania as a space in which they could feel at ease, others, however, chose to place their emphasis on their 'heavenly home'. Moving beyond the 'earthly realm' therefore, the penultimate section continues to consider missionaries' conceptions of home, understood in the sense of 'a metaphorical or discursive space of belonging and identification', through an examination of discourses around Heaven. In trying to locate home, my questioning led to the unexpected finding that for a number of Evangelical missionaries in this study, they will not reach a place they can truly call home, where they feel they belong, until they are standing before Jesus Christ in Heaven. Conceptualising themselves as 'strangers' in this world, these participants did not seem perturbed that they felt 'like a fish out of water' (Butcher, 2009) in Albania. Instead, they viewed this sense of uneasiness as a positive reminder that they do not belong there, nor in their sending country, but instead in Heaven. Cultivating a sense of homeliness was therefore not a priority for them. This finding, I argue, challenges the mainstream literature on home, which I argue, typically assumes that a sense of 'homeliness' is a universal goal upheld by all migrants.

The Christian Home and Mission Theory: Then and Now

'Movement is a part of our missionary life. It's a tiresome part...re-establishing homes, but it's part of the costs...it's part of the call of being a missionary, and we accept that' (Kate).

Within missiological thinking, the importance of the Christian home was first mentioned in an essay written by Rufus Anderson in 1836. As the secretary of the American Board, he had been invited to write an introduction to the biography of Mary Ellis, who was a recently deceased missionary wife. In it, Anderson (1836:xi, cited in Roberts, 2008b) asserted that the missionary family was central to a successful mission strategy, since 'the heathen should have an opportunity of seeing Christian families. The domestic constitution among them is dreadfully disordered...to rectify it requires example as well as precept'. In this way the missionary home was seen as being an instrument of the mission enterprise, providing an example for 'the heathen' to follow. Anderson (1836) argued, therefore, that demonstrating the workings of a Christian home was to be a key task for missionaries. Indeed, when looking at work by historians, it becomes clear that many missionaries of the 19th century believed it to be their duty to show those whom they wished to evangelise the 'correct' way of running a Christian home (Jolly, 1989; Langmore, 1989).

Writing about the work of Protestant missionaries in Hawaii for example, Langmore (1989) cites a missionary's letter, wherein it is explained that a missionary home should be 'the object lesson of a civilised, Christian home'. The term civilized is important here, given the significance of a raging debate of the time around whether missionaries should be concerned with 'civilizing', and/or 'evangelizing' people. The first standpoint, as historian William Hutchinson (1987) explicates in his study of American mission theory, held that a people must be westernized, or 'civilized' before they could become Christian. Meanwhile, an evangelizing mission theory held that evangelization should predate any attempts at cultural change. Looking at the work that has been carried out on the Christian missionary home to date, it is clear that historians have thus far chosen to focus on the former mission theory, taking the civilising missions of the colonial period as their lens on the domestic scale (Hunter, 1984; Grimshaw, 1989; Langmore, 1989; Labode, 1993). In her work on New England missionary wives living in Hawaii for instance, Grimshaw (1989) features reports that detail how missionaries tried to persuade people to 'build better houses, make tables, seats, use separate dishes and eating utensils, make fences around their houses' and 'to live like human beings' (Lyons,

report on Waimea Station, 1837:1). Meanwhile Hunter (1984: 192), in *The Gospel of Gentility*, recounts how Chinese helpers 'transported beds, stoves, pianos...up torturous rivers and across mountain ranges to reproduce American home life in China'. This emphasis on the materialities of daily life, including the material design of dwellings, and the inclusion of particular possessions, points to a particular vision of civilization, which 'was associated in [the missionary's] mind with the externals of western culture' (Langmore, 1989:89). Labode (1993:126) explains that for British Anglican missionaries in Africa, the material restructuring of homes from round huts to square ones was said to 'correspond to the spiritual changes which took place in a convert'. Moreover, this focus also echoes wider work on imperial histories of home in geography which make reference to the importing of western domesticity via material culture. For example, writing about a picture of an English home threatened in India during an uprising, Blunt (2003a: 74) suggests that:

'the rebels appear set to destroy the woman, her children, and the home itself. But the presence of the Indian insurgents is the only indication that the home is in India. Otherwise, the furniture and decorative interior appear quintessentially British, without even a visible cord for the ceiling fan known as a punkah that would have undoubtedly cooled the room. As a result, the Indian rebels are shown to be invading not only a British home but they also appear to be threatening British rule in India.'

These accounts therefore reveal a strong relationship between conceptions of civilization, material culture and the home in mission theory.

Yet, while it is important not to underestimate this trend, Roberts (2008b) is right to raise concerns that missionaries' emphasis on the home as a way to spread western cultures among the colonies has at times been overemphasised to the detriment of alternative accounts. During the 1920s for example, two key study books were

published by the Student Volunteer Movement³⁶ and the Central Committee on the United Study of Foreign Missions³⁷, entitled *The Home with the Open Door* (1920) and *A Straight Way Toward Tomorrow* (1926). Both of these were written by Mary Schauffler Platt, who hailed from a well known missionary family. Enjoying a wide readership, Platt (1920; 1926) tried to pull apart the by now intimate relationship between visions of the Christian home and Western culture that the aforementioned scholars have focused on. Choosing a different tack, her work chimed in with a broader shift in Anglo-American missiological thinking that was influenced by the ending of World War I. Concerned with moving away from paternalism, this era was distinguished by a greater openness to cultural difference. In this spirit Platt (1920: 61) beseeched missionary wives of the time to carefully study their new environment, and to encourage 'not a slavish copy of her home...but an adoption and adaptation of the principles which have enabled her to make a real home. Through the door of her home they enter and catch a vision' [of what their home could be like].

Building on this, a report entitled *Christian Home Making* was presented to the International Missionary Council³⁸ in Madras, India, in 1938. Written by a group of American women, it argued that the Christian mother, and the upkeep of the Christian home, were integral to the (re)production of Christian cultures abroad. Yet rather than assert that the home take on Western form, the report drew on examples from countries around the world to demonstrate how new Christians were upholding the values that they had been taught by missionaries, but according to their own cultural mores. Indeed, this was actively encouraged. This movement foreshadowed the start of

³⁶ An organisation founded in 1886 which looked to recruit college and university students in the United States for missionary service abroad.

³⁷ In 1990 women's foreign missionary societies collaborated to set up the Central Committee on the United Study of Foreign Missions, which annually facilitated the production of mission study texts for use in local missionary circles.

³⁸ 'The International Missionary Council (IMC) was formed in 1921 and in 1961 became part of the World Council of Churches, founded in 1948 out of the other two major strands of 20th century inter-church co-operation, the Life and Work and Faith and Order movements. All three movements trace their origins to the World Missionary Conference held in Edinburgh in 1910.' [<http://roxborough.com/REFORMED/IMC.htm>]

a new era in missionary thought, which was characterized by a shift in relation to culture. The Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization³⁹ in 1974 was a key moment in this trajectory, and was attended by over 4000 evangelists, missionaries, mission leaders, theologians, pastors and national church leaders from approximately 150 countries. At the conference the direction of mission strategy was fiercely debated amongst the delegates, using the medium of speeches and submitted papers. A drafting committee, steered by John R.W. Stott, a world renowned theologian, carefully meshed together the ideas presented across the duration of the conference. The resulting document, known as the Lausanne Covenant, was signed by the leading evangelist of the time, Billy Graham, and all the conference participants, in a public ceremony on the last day. This document was to have significant ramifications for the shape of contemporary Evangelical mission theory, and today 'virtually every major Evangelical mission agency in North America, and many other countries, [has] endorsed the covenant to replace or supplement their statement of faith' (Winter & Hawthorne 2009:764).

Covering a wide variety of topics across its fifteen compact sections, it is article 10, 'Evangelism and Culture'⁴⁰, that is of particular significance for this chapter:

'Missions have all too frequently exported with the Gospel an alien culture and churches have sometimes been in bondage to culture rather than to Scripture. Christ's evangelists must humbly seek to empty themselves of all but their personal authenticity in order to become the servants of others, and churches must seek to transform and enrich culture, all for the glory of God'.

In this article implicit reference is made to the widespread charge that missionaries have been guilty of foisting a form of cultural imperialism upon those they that evangelize.

³⁹ The congress was a conference attended by approximately 2,700 Evangelical Christian leaders, and took place in Palais du Beaulieu in Lausanne, Switzerland.

⁴⁰ <http://www.lausanne.org/en/documents/lausanne-covenant.html> [Accessed 9th April 2010]

As one participant in this study put it, 'there have been historical mistakes, and we want to learn from them. Missionaries assumed back then that they should be bringing British Christian culture to Africa or China for example. It was like in that film where they dressed up Africans as British people and transported over an organ. They thought you had to have an organ and a church building with pews like in Britain.' In contrast to this attitude, what came across in interviews and during fieldwork discussions was missionaries' awareness that the message that they were sharing should be 'contextualised' in Albanian culture. Indeed, for Jacob,

'missionaries, by our very definition, we're supposed anyway, to be kind of identifying with the culture, the people, and trying to find ways to communicate the Gospel in culturally sensitive and appropriate terms that would make sense to them'.

Here Jacob stresses the expectation that a missionary learn about, understand, and interact with a culture in order to know how best to communicate the Gospel. Emphasising the centrality of this task, the missionaries in this study were keen to differentiate themselves from other expatriates by highlighting their proximity to, and engagement with, Albania and its inhabitants. Speaking of other foreigners in Tirana for example, Patrick made the following contrast, 'a lot of them [expatriates] have been in Albania a long time, but they live in a bubble. They have never been in a house looking on while a woman is cooking on a hotplate, sticking bare wires into a socket to try and cook for her family'. Instead, rather than spend time in expatriate clubs (Beaverstock, 2011) or try and construct an 'expatriate bubble' (Fechter, 2007) missionaries continually expressed their desire to 'get inside' the culture (a point which I refer to in Chapter Six and in the following section).

These sentiments can be framed by the term 'contextualisation'. Coined in the 1970s (Ott & Strauss, 2010), and taking its inspiration from the theology of incarnation⁴¹, this

⁴¹ Incarnational Theology advocates that mission ought to involve embodying the 'good news' that Christians' proclaim (see Langmead, 2004)

approach advocates 'adapt[ing] ourselves and our presentation of God's message to the culture of the receiving people' (Kraft, 2009: 400), and its aims appear two fold. First, to avoid future claims of cultural imperialism; second, to enable a more effective communication of the Christian message. Key to this, contextualisation stresses that a major part of mission work is 'the search for what in German is called der Anknüpfungspunkt, connection or point of contact' (Reyburn, 2009:471). Consequently, rather than just appreciating cultural difference from afar, missionaries actively worked at lessening it (see Pelkmans, 2007), through what the Lausanne Covenant called, 'empty[ing] themselves of all but their personal authenticity'. As the fieldwork process revealed, this involved not only becoming a diligent student of the environment around them (Bielo, 2011), but also considering the impact of, inter alia, their general appearance, dress style, language skills, customary habits, and most importantly for the purposes of this chapter, their homes, on the effective transmission of the Christian message.

Indeed, as the subsequent sections will demonstrate, the construction of the missionary home materialises debates around this 'contextualisation' ideal. From the scale of a house's location, to its architecture and domestic materialities, missionary homes are saturated in mission politics, and at times reveal the disjunctures between mission theory and practice. Having achieved the status of a 'buzzword' (Tristan) amongst Evangelical Christians, the theory of 'contextualisation' has been accepted to the extent that, as one missionary explained to me, some people 'seem to think that the acid test of a "true" missionary is 100% cultural adaptation.' It is with this in mind that the following sections trace the relationship between 'contextualisation' and the contemporary Christian missionary home, and in turn the disjunctures between this ideal and missionaries' lived realities.

'The Missionary Community? It's Like a Goldfish Bowl': The Politics of Location and Housing

Simon first referred to the missionary community as being like a 'goldfish bowl' in the early stages of the research. The phrase stuck with me, and as time passed I came to understand, through interviews and informal conversations, that missionaries felt the gaze of Albanians, their supporters, and other missionaries peering in to their 'bowl'. Informed by this insight, I consider the missionary home as 'multi-scalar' (Blunt & Dowling, 2006: 22), constituted by objects, the house itself, the neighbourhood within it is situated, and ultimately the other-worldly scale of Heaven, each of which this Chapter addressed. To begin with however I discuss how missionary homes are caught up in a politics of location, as well as debates around a house's size and quality. In light of which I argue that the notionally private acts of choosing where one will live, and what kind of shelter they will live in, are in fact enmeshed in a wider politics of social relationships, forged through the mission enterprise.

The Politics of Location

As I discussed in Chapter Four, it was extremely unusual that a missionary would feel themselves called to a particular location in Albania. Instead, missionaries typically reported that they undertook research into where their type of ministry was most needed, received advice from mission organisations, and prayerfully considered where in the country they should set up home. While I was unable to gain information on the exact location of each missionary, during my fieldwork it became patently obvious that the vast majority resided in Tirana, Albania's capital. As interviews, and my ethnographic fieldwork revealed, this was a point of contention within the mission community. Take for example extracts from my fieldnotes, which describe two separate scenes from the AEP annual conference:

Fieldnotes, AEP Conference, November 11th 2011

The chairs had been arranged in a circle, large enough to accommodate the 100 odd missionaries who had come down from their rooms for the conference's time of group prayer. A slight Albanian lady, her long dark hair pulled back from her face, stood up to address the crowd. Dressed casually in jeans, with no hint of make up, she looked strained. It was almost apologetically she began to address the audience. 'I work with my husband in the North, and I am always being asked to start new Bible study groups, to move to different villages to share the Gospel, and to start more churches. There is a lot of work to be done up there, but I am just one woman, and I am not capable of doing it all. Most missionaries are based in Tirana. And I do not mean to offend anyone. But we need to ask the Lord where the needs are, and where he wants us to be. We need to check that. I know someone in the North who is working up there, and feels so isolated. And there is another couple who are struggling with all that is to be done. We are desperate. Are you called to Albania, or to Tirana?'

Fieldnotes, AEP Conference Focus Group, November 12th 2011

The worksheets were laid out, enough pens were on the table, and the right number of chairs were carefully placed around the conference table for the first of my two focus group sessions. I was nervous. The missionaries came in, in dribs and drabs, and I pretended to look busy, shuffling papers, writing down notes and generally preparing myself. As I did so, I noticed Martin and William sat near each other, engaged in conversation. I wondered if they had ever met, one living in Tirana, and the other further South. I think I had missed the initial hellos, but overheard Martin asking, 'so, William, what do you do?'. In his usual confident manner William replied, 'I'm a teacher and I live in Tirana'. Leaning back slightly in his chair, Martin let out a 'oooooh' of exasperation, before following up with, 'Tirana? I don't know what people want with Tirana'. 'Well, the Albanians

are in Tirana!'. 'And what about the Stephen Centre?' asked Martin. Refusing to rise to what was clearly 'bait', William sounded defiant, 'I ate two meal there on sat!'. What followed was a sullen, 'hmm. Well, that's ok for you then'. And then there was silence between the pair.

These scenes capture the frustration of two different Evangelical workers, first, that of an Albanian woman working to share the Gospel with her fellow countrymen and women, and second, a foreign male missionary. Working in different ends of the country, one in the north, the other south of Tirana, both expressed, in their own ways, their exasperation at the concentration of missionaries in Albania's capital city. On the one hand, this can be attributed, as Patrick explained to me, to 'the way the world is changing. The population is going to be mostly in cities, and that means a huge change in the way that you do missions. 50 years ago we were looking at the jungles, and now we're talking about cities.' On the other hand however, there were also concerns amongst other missionaries that Tirana was a popular destination not simply for reasons of mission strategy, but because it was seen as a 'soft' option. More specifically, the availability of amenities such as supermarkets with international brands, entertainment facilities, and the presence of other non-missionary expatriates was often highlighted as some of the perks of Tirana living by those based outside the capital.

Comments such as Martin's, which focused on William's use of the Stephen Centre, speak to discourses around what a missionary should and shouldn't be. For some missionaries, and indeed some Albanians that I spoke to, their colleagues should be living and working in the 'real' Albania, rather than a city environment. Cocooned by foreign styled amenities it was felt that missionaries were in danger of being caught up in a 'foreign enclave', and not attending to the Albanians that they have come to serve. Meanwhile, those based in Tirana often defensively explained to me their motives for living there, citing the importance of a mission strategy that targets middle class and affluent Albanians. It is these people, they argued, who would be most helpful in propagating the Christian message amongst their compatriates. Clearly therefore a missionary's choice of location was open to scrutiny, as other missionaries, and at times,

the Albanians they had come to serve, questioned whether a missionary belonged in such an urban and cosmopolitan environment.

Having chosen where in Albania they would live, the next step was to decide where in that location they should choose their house. According to the discourse of contextualisation, missionaries seemed keen to mix in with 'the locals', and wanted to avoid what one participant described as, 'that missionary enclave vibe'. This was particularly important for Marilyn, who shared with me:

'I think, when I've read books about missions in Africa and China, they had little compounds and they had all these servants and stuff. There was this strange stereotype that a missionary has servants and lives isolated. We don't do that. We live in with the people. We rent a house, live in the community. I think we're trying to integrate so they don't see us as strange'.

Marilyn clearly uses colonial style missionary housing arrangements as a point of departure from which to articulate her perspective, and values living cheek by jowl with the Albanians that she has come to serve. This arises not just from a personal desire to be part of the community, but also from the strategic perspective of not wanting to seem 'strange'. Indeed, Kate, a missionary based in Tirana, further explained that missionaries today 'see that they need to be in a neighbourhood where they're wanting to work' in order to 'relate to those people'. Being able to 'come alongside' Albanians was seen to be an important facet of missionary work. Meredith, for example, explained how she saw living in her neighbourhood as advantageous to spreading the Gospel. Shopping at her local *dyqan* (shop) she had struck up a good relationship with her neighbours and the shopkeeper, and found that by being a sociable presence in the *lagje* (neighbourhood) she was more readily accepted into women's coffee times. There she could share about her life, and her reason for living in Albania.

Meanwhile, for Lucas and Clarissa, their experience of living in a largely foreign neighbourhood in Durrës led them to question their personal 'integrity' as missionaries. During one interview, Clarissa drew a stark contrast between where they currently lived, with 'high walls and gates, where everyone is very much in their own house' and the area in which they work, where they frequently hear, 'oh, come in, come in for coffee, come for coffee' (see Atkinson and Flint 2004; Vesselinov, 2008; Vesselinov et al., 2007; Vesselinov and Le Goix, 2012) for segregation associated with gated communities). Expanding further she explained, 'it's such a community feel...you go to Kineta and you just see people and everybody's just so hospitable. That's where our heart is'. Clarissa's comment again spoke to the expectation that missionaries 'contextualise' themselves, and that they try to build bridges, or points of contact between themselves and the Albanians that they worked with. For Lucas and Clarissa this meant moving from their current housing, and searching for alternative accommodation in the *lagje* (neighbourhood) in which they worked. Rather than spatially segregate themselves, this missionary couple actively sought to embed their house in the hustle and bustle of Kineta's illegal settlement. This attitude is far removed from the examples presented to us by historians, who depict the housing arrangements of missionaries operating in colonial contexts as clustered around 'mission stations' (see Langmore, 1989; Skeie, 1999, 2012) that were often placed on higher ground, away from the nearest settlement. At the same time, it contrasts with the contemporary housing practices of other kinds of expatriates abroad, such as Smiley's (2010) research in Dar Es Salaam. Here, despite postcolonial efforts to desegregate the city, expatriate everyday life happens in only two urban areas. In a similar vein, recent research has depicted expatriates as living in 'bubbles', busy constructing boundaries 'between the cocooned expatriate communities and a sprawling third-world city which surround them' (Fechter, 2007: Preface). In this way missionaries' determination to live in intimate proximity with Albanians provides both an interesting counterpoint to the previous chapter's emphasis on the productivity of spatial distance, as well as presenting an alternate way of relating to one's host environment which is currently underrepresented in academic literature on wealthy migrants' living choices.

Moving from the scale of location to that of the house itself, missionaries were particularly concerned by how their choice of housing might be interpreted by outside spectators. Indeed, they had a heightened awareness 'of the role played by the physical characteristics of the matter around us, such as buildings' (Ho & Hatfield, 2010: 638). These concerns were not necessarily unfounded, as Mitchell's (2004) research has shown. In her work on a privileged Vancouver suburb for example, Mitchell focused on a group of elite migrants from Hong Kong who had been building houses there since the 1980s. These large homes, which generally extended to the edges of a lot, came to be known as 'monster houses'. The newly constructed houses contrasted vividly with older, British style residential architecture and acted as an icon of the economic and cultural shifts that were happening in Vancouver at the time. But these 'monster houses' fast became a source of anxiety for Canadian residents, not simply because they took up too much space, but more importantly because they felt that they symbolised a kind of takeover. Concern spread that there would be competition for limited resources in the area, including access to school places. Consequently, Mitchell (2004) demonstrates how material structures can become a loci for debate around wider discourses of, as in this case, democracy and citizenship.

This realisation was most clearly voiced by Grace during a conversation in the playroom of her three-story house. Coming to the tail end of our second recorded interview, her daughter had commented that I looked tired and offered to get me a glass of water, which I gratefully accepted. Upon returning she heard us talking about how nice their home was, and chipped in to the conversation, 'yes, but we don't put pictures of our house on Facebook' (See Flynn, 2003; Hjorthol & Gripsrud, 2009; Michael & Gaver, 2009, for work on technology and the home). Grace looked a little embarrassed, and after asking her to explain the reasoning behind that decision, she told me, 'this is a nice house, but we lived without power for like three or four weeks in some areas of our house because it was wired wrong. It's hard for people to understand, it looks nice, but that doesn't mean it really works nicely.' With this comment, she was referring to the

perceptions that her supporters might have of this large home, which she shared with her husband and four children. In this way Grace explained that she constantly felt on a tightrope, having to negotiate 'the line between being wise about what people see about my life here, because they can't understand the dynamics, and [asking] where does it become hypocrisy, or where does it become where I'm not being honest with people?'. Rather than being able to simply choose the house her family desired, this negotiation was important to Grace because ultimately the family's supporters are the economic lifeblood of their missionary lives in Albania. It was essential therefore that Grace stage manage the impression that they were giving through prayer letters and public communication such as photos.

Going one step further, Grace also pointed towards the competing demands of not only her supporters, but also other stakeholders who might judge the outward appearance of the home:

'Everyone puts on a show of what they think they want everyone to see, that's why you have a living room, because that's the room that everyone went to when they came to visit, and you have a family room, that's for the mess, you know? From the beginning of time, that's what people had, they had a show room, you know? And so, I think it's just that we have a lot more people that look at our show room'.

Grace's use of the word 'showroom' was particularly apt for describing how the choice of housing communicated different messages to those who chose to look. Indeed, beyond worries about how one's house might be viewed by supporters, it was clear that some fellow missionaries had strong opinions on the matter. Jane, for example, had been a missionary before marrying her Albanian husband, and now works as a part-time school teacher in an Albanian church. Having lived as both a 'missionary' and a 'non-missionary' she spoke of her sense of unease at the size and quality of houses that missionaries lived in in Tirana, in comparison to Albanians that she knew. She spoke of a family from her church who live in a 2 bedroom apartment with three little children,

and contrasted this to missionaries who 'come here, and they're not willing to do that. 'We can't live like that, we need an office and at least 2 bedrooms for our kids, and we need this and that'. Having had time to reflect on her period as a missionary, and now taking a backseat on the scene, she also expressed concerns about her own house, which was built by her and her husband, asking 'what are we teaching the Albanians? We are teaching them that...oh, if you are faithful to the Lord you can build a big house'.

Indeed, the way that missionaries' homes were perceived by Albanians was often discussed amongst the missionary community. Drawing on the tenets of contextualisation the majority of people that I spoke to echoed Emma's sentiments, 'it's much harder to share the Gospel with someone if you're not willing to live like they are'. Taking an extreme example Emma went on, 'like if you're going to a slum and you're living in this huge house and driving an expensive car they will not listen to you. Why should they?' Displays of wealth such as living in a large house were therefore seen to be detrimental to the missionary endeavour, and were often conceptualised as creating a 'barrier' between them and the Albanians that they hoped to engage. Yet for some missionaries the realities of living at the same standard as the majority of Albanians was difficult. Citing the impact it might have on children accustomed to a more affluent lifestyle, and the emotional burden it would represent, they also claimed that Albanians simply didn't expect them to do so. Rather, they reported that some Albanians would snigger at the 'American pretending to live like an Albanian'.

As this section has examined, missionary homes were therefore felt to be physical symbols, open to interpretation and judgment. For example, I found that missionaries outside of the capital questioned the concentration of missionaries in Tirana. Meanwhile, missionaries' perceptions of supporters expectations also influenced choices over the size and quality of the missionary home. Behind both of these we see how the missionary home is subsumed into the wider Evangelical project, and in turn compared to the current 'contextualisation ideal' today. Building on this, the next

section drills down to consider the inside of missionaries' homes, and a 'politics of interior design' (Courtney) that pervades them.

Domestic Materiality and Consumption: The 'Politics of Interior Design'

Missionaries' material possessions provided a further locus for discussion, and much like the politics surrounding a missionary's choice of house, and its location, what they had in their home, and how it was decorated, was also a matter of public interest. More specifically, as I examine in this section, there was contestation over the extent to which it was acceptable for missionaries to try and (re)create a sense of their previous home, with its cultural trappings. Yet, more clearly than in previous sections, we see how the emotional needs of some missionaries led them to try and negotiate around the 'contextualisation ideal', and in the process reclaim the home as not only a space that is determined by the expectations of outside stakeholders and missionary ideals, but also their own desires.

In 1989 Peter Saunders (p.181) posited that 'the home is where people are offstage, free from surveillance, in control of their immediate environment. It is their castle'. In recent years however, scholars (Gorman-Murray, 2006, 2007, 2008a, 2008b, 2009; 2012; Johnston & Valentine, 1995) have brought this assertion into question through their work on gay and lesbian home spaces. Johnston and Valentine (1995), for example, undertook research in New Zealand and the UK with lesbians living in their parental home. Driven by an interest in how lesbians create and manage their domestic environments, they found that their participants felt pressured to 'restrict the performance of their sexual identity in their own physical surroundings, hiding pictures of lesbian icon KD Lang under the mattress and gay fiction behind the bookcase, ever cautious that the privacy of their bedroom may be subject to the gaze of brothers, sisters and parents' (Johnston & Valentine, 1995: 93). Meanwhile Gorman-Murray (2007) has also underlined how the home can become a space of surveillance by not only those inside its walls, but also people looking in. While it might seem incongruous

to compare the experiences of homosexuals and Evangelical missionaries, there are clear similarities between the two groups, who experience monitoring within their 'castle'. Indeed, this has been one of the main themes of the chapter so far, and continues on into this section. Here I begin by considering the 'things' that can cause contestation, whether it be the gay fiction that Johnston and Valentine's (1995) participants decided to hide in their bedroom, or in the case of the missionaries in this study, a leather sofa or fridge freezer shipped over from America.

When asked about how they had made their 'house a home' (Waitt & Gorman-Murray, 2007:2) Ben and Lauren, a missionary couple living outside of Tirana, responded with some dismay with a story about some southern American Baptists who had arrived in their town. Recalling their arrival Ben said, 'when they went in the house, what was the first thing they did?'. He continued, 'they renovated the whole house according to what they would have at home'. While the problem with this might not be immediately obvious to a non-missionary, and indeed would seem perfectly reasonable, Ben went on to explain his grievance: 'what is actually going on there is the creation of a culture here that is American...then missionaries live in that culture and not the one that they have come to reach out in the name of Christ to, which is what you define as a missionary....it's not colonizing that we're doing.' This viewpoint was a classic example of how material culture was used as a way to judge missionary lives. Here Ben argued that living in 'that [home] culture' goes against the very essence of what it means to be a missionary. In other words, he understood contextualisation to be a key tenet of missionary life, and consequently frowned upon the introduction of 'American' material culture by his neighbours. Styling a home in an 'American way' (see Hoganson, 2002) was deemed to put a barrier between missionaries and the Albanians they had come to serve, creating distance between them. Further Ben raises concerns about the evocation of colonial tendencies within mission praxis, and in turn the damage that could be done to their ability to successfully proselytise. In a similar vein, another missionary told me that mission organisations often advise people to hire a crate for shipment to their destination, and to fill it with home comforts and electrical appliances. To this he commented, 'how stupid is that? Nobody's going to know how to fix them

first of all. And then you immediately create the impression 'America has arrived!' Indeed, there seemed to be a general anxiety to avoid any association with the civilising missions of the colonial period. For many, this permeated their understanding of what not to do when setting up home, and became manifest in their decisions about not only the material culture that they included in their home, but also their judgment of other missionaries. Following Fechter and Walsh (2010:1197), 'the significance of the past in shaping contemporary...mobilities' was therefore clearly evident.

In addition, the 'contextualisation ideal' was also evoked outside of discussions of what was judged to look 'American'. Further demonstrating how the home became subsumed within the wider project of evangelisation, I also encountered opinions on not only what shouldn't be included in the home, but also how it should be arranged. In a study of open plan living in Australia, Dowling (2008: 546) observed that:

'Children's activities disrupted the cleanliness and spaciousness of open plan and therefore required stage management – to ensure respectability. Open plan militated against the participants' self-representation as capable of keeping a proper home, whereas keeping children and their objects upstairs created a firm boundary for visitors and helped participants to present a more respectable interior'.

Similarly, in the following excerpt taken from an interview with a 30 year old missionary, we see how the placing of things was designed to create a particular impression. Here Emma shares her experience of growing up in a missionary home in the Middle East:

'One thing I know my parents did growing up, which was very conscious, so that's why I know, going to other people's houses you could see the difference, but our living room was considered a place for our guests. And so, it was completely designed around the style of the people around us. So we would say—everybody is like, "Well, we want to be comfortable in our house." And my parents were like, the living room is not for us to be

comfortable in. It's for them to be comfortable in...They [the people they were trying to reach] don't have a lot of books around. Books make them uncomfortable, if they have too many books around, because they're just not used to them. So to not keep so many books in the living room. Keep them somewhere else. Like, your kitchen, your bedroom, that can be as Western as you want it to be, because nobody's going to really see that. Your kitchen they might, once they get to know you a bit more, they might see your kitchen. So we consciously made our living room look like the people around us, so they could come there and be comfortable and not be uncomfortable'.

In this excerpt we learn that Emma's parents home was carved into private and 'mission' space. In this conscious demarcation, the kitchen and the bedroom were rooms where self-expression could be unfettered, while the living room was seen as an instrument of the mission enterprise. Just as previously we saw that some participants were concerned about how having an American-feeling home might alienate Albanians, here we again discover how personal possessions that might make the target audience 'uncomfortable' are censored. Underlying this is the assumption that in order to best communicate the Gospel a missionary must be willing and able to 'contextualise'. In other words, cultural distance, manifest in materials in a missionary home, was seen as something to eradicate.

Up to this point I have examined how the missionary home is considered an organ of the wider Evangelical project. I have shown that the missionary home is held up against a 'contextualisation ideal' against which missionaries' use material culture to judge each other. Yet, while this 'contextualisation ideal' was widely championed, I did however also encounter alternative approaches to setting up home. In particular, through interviews, informal conversations, and my own ethnographic fieldnotes, I explored missionary wives' ideas on home, and more specifically, how and why they settled on their choice of interior design. As the following vignettes demonstrate, while these participants were aware that 'there is definitely a politics to interior design' (Courtney),

they did not necessarily subscribe to the view that manifestations of American culture were detrimental to the mission effort. Meanwhile, we also see how the emotional burden of missionary life played a role in the selection of interior design.

Lindsey

Lindsey works as a church planter and lives in an apartment in Tirana with her husband, daughter and dog. Having lived in a few homes in Tirana since arriving as a missionary, she chose to talk to me about one in particular, centering her thoughts on the living room:

‘I did the living room in Americana, and I got flack for it from one person. And it was another missionary, and she said, this is going to offend the Albanians. And I said you know, this is how I decorated in America, this is what my kids are used to, I even had wall paper with American flags, a border. And the Albanians loved it. Everyone copied mine, everyone got cross stitch and made stars, American stars, red white and blue, and put them in their houses. They loved it they thought it was awesome, because they respected the country I think was part of it’.

Here we see how another missionary voiced their opinion about in what way Lindsey’s home should be decorated. Instead of encouraging the reflection of Lindsey’s identity as an American in her choice of decor, her friend instead prioritised the detrimental effect that she believed it would have on Albanian visitors. Rather than allow Lindsey free reign over what has traditionally been understood as ‘a place in which members of a family can live in private, away from the scrutiny of others’ (Allan and Crow, 1989:4) therefore, the home was instead viewed as part of the mission enterprise. Yet Lindsey decided to keep this style regardless, for two reasons. First, she felt it important for her family to have a sense of continuity in their home. Second, she found that this visible sign of difference actually facilitated interaction, and encouraged Albanians to engage with her and her home. Fleshing out Waitt and Gorman-Murray’s (2011:1384)

contention that 'home making practices are about making decisions about points of connection or disconnection from others, ideas and objects, and thus who or what to exclude and include', Lindsey's decision to keep her Americana scheme represented a bold move amid the current contextualisation drive.

Grace

Grace told me that she realised that her home was American in feel, and had at times been worried about whether this would be an 'obstacle' to Albanians visiting. Yet just like Lindsey, her decision to decorate her home in a familiar style became:

'a good opportunity for doing ministry out of my home, because people recognise this is a home, it's not just house and it's not just cold. A lot of Albanian houses I've been in, they just seemed a little bit stiff and cold and not warm and cosy... And I've had even some Albanian women say, "I'd really like for you to help me to learn how to put myself into a making a home for like a home as opposed to just a place you dwell'.

Grace was particularly aware that 'a house is not necessarily nor automatically a home' (Blunt and Dowling, 2006:3) and used her flair for interior design as a way to not only create a comfortable and 'homely' environment for her young family, but also to converse with Albanian women that visited her home, opening up opportunities for further meetings. In this way Grace looked to circumvent some of the negativity around non-contextualisation, explaining that, 'I think if I came across still segregating myself, saying look I am an American I am just gonna be an American, I am gonna do my American thing and you know, forget you hmm, I think would be a stumbling block, but I try really carefully to still open my home.'

Lydia

Meanwhile, for Lydia the topic of how she had decorated her home was highly emotive. Clearly struggling with homesickness since the departure of one of her sons, the decor of her home was extremely important to her:

‘You know that you’re not home, but sometimes you want to feel like you are. You know, you know that you’re not in Kansas anymore...But at least inside the house, I feel at home because it reminds me of the States, it reminds me of the home we had in the States. I mean, I don’t like change, so if the inside of my house can stay about the same. I’m a little better off. I think that having things that are familiar and that aren’t always Albanian helps me to deal with the other stuff. Because when you leave the front door, you immediately know you’re a foreigner. I don’t know, it’s just nice to have something that’s familiar’.

Lydia experienced her body as ‘inescapably ‘foreign’’ (Walsh, 2006a: 275) and this left her feeling unsettled and unable to feel that she wholly ‘belonged’ in Albania. As in Butcher’s (2009) study of expatriates living in Singapore, Lydia strongly desired to ‘replace’ home as an emotional response to the difference that she felt surrounded by. This involved creating a space of ‘comfort and cultural fit that [could be] inserted into the cultural space of the host locality’. Putting up wallpaper from her old home acted as what Tolia-Kelly (2004a: 317) calls a ‘connective marker’ to a ‘geographical node of identification. Through [it’s] prismic nature “other” lives, land and homes [were] made part of this one’. For Lydia therefore the home was a place of refuge, wherein familiar material culture helped give her respite from the dogged feeling that she did not and would not belong.

This World is Not My Home I'm Just Passin' Through: Heaven as Home

In 1985 the geographer Knight wrote that 'Heaven's landscape remains as part of the *terrae incognitae*' (127), or 'unknown land'. This is true in two senses, first the exact specificities of Heaven are, to an extent, unknown to people who are still living, and second, for scholars working on the geographies of home, discussions around Heaven remains largely a blind spot. Indeed, to date only one scholar (Mee, 2007) has evoked notions of Heaven within their work. Writing in the context of experiences of public housing in inner Newcastle, Australia, Mee (2007: 215) found that several participants compared their public housing situation to Heaven, or as Heaven like. Here Heaven was associated with words such as 'beautiful' and 'wonderful'. Yet while physically seeing and experiencing Heaven remains the reserve of the 'dead', I found that several participants spoke of Heaven, not in terms of 'beauty', but as a very real entity that animated their conception of home more generally. Massey (1992: 14) has written that 'the identity of home derives precisely from the fact that it had always in one way or another been open; constructed out of movement, communication, social relations which always stretched beyond it'. Indeed, building on the insight that home is 'multi-scalar' (Blunt & Dowling, 2006), I transcend the earthly realm of home, neighbourhood, city, region, and nation to consider Heaven as home.

William looked amused as I asked him to tell me about his ideas on home. He laughed a little to himself, and with a wry smile began to explain:

'This World is not my home, I'm just passin' through. My treasures are laid up somewhere beyond the blue. The angels beckon me through heaven's open door, and I can't feel at home in this world anymore'.

At the time I wondered at how poetic his words were, and the distinctiveness of his language compared to what followed it. It was only later I discovered that William was reciting a hymn, written in 1980 by a Baptist Christian composer called Albert E. Brumley. Entitled *This World is Not My Home* it takes its inspiration from:

Matthew 6:20

But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.

Hebrews 11:13

All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth.

Hebrews 13:14.

People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own.

Over time it became evident that while the delivery of William's sentiment was novel, its content was not. Instead, the belief that heaven is a Christian's ultimate home, understood as a place of safety and belonging, was a recurrent theme throughout the research, as this section explores.

In the previous sections we saw that the 'missionary is prepared...to bond - to become a 'belonger' with the people to whom he or she is called to share the good news' (Brewster & Brewster, 2009:465) through the 'contextualisation ideal'. At the same time however, I also drew attention to the difficulties of doing so, as some missionaries crave the familiar 'home' comforts of their sending country. Yet beyond the human inclination to try and make 'a house a home' (Waitt & Gorman-Murray, 2007:2), numerous missionaries also spoke of an acceptance of their ultimate 'unhomeliness', not only in Albania, but also the world more generally. In other words, even as some participants tried to cultivate a sense of being at home in Albania, and their physical dwelling, it was understood that this would never be fully accomplished. Going on to explain the significance of the hymn which he had so jauntily recited, William explained:

'I mean, there are places here on earth where I can feel comfortable. I need those places, but those places are temporary. There's different physical spaces where I can be relaxed and put my feet up. And that's home, I mean, earth is my temporary home. This fleshly body that I have, it's going to die. But my spirit will live. And so, where I go when I die, that's where home is for me. When I get home to heaven, that's when I'll be able to put my feet up, take a deep breath, and rest...It's just like I'm a stranger in Albania, I'm a stranger in this world in general. So I keep this [take out 'temporary residents card from his wallet] as a reminder that I don't actually live here. I mean, I live here, but this isn't where I belong'.

In this extract William makes reference to two different homes, first, a temporary one on earth, and second, Heaven, where he will live after his death. While he needs a place where he can relax and feel at ease during this lifetime, there is less emphasis placed on that than his final resting place. As a 'stranger' in this world he feels that he doesn't belong anywhere, yet this does not seem too troubling for him given that he knows he will one day go to Heaven. To remind himself of this, William carries a mock 'Temporary Resident's Card' (Plate 7.1) issued by the 'Department for Immigration'. The card is a physical signifier that William is only a resident on Earth for a limited amount of time, and that ultimately he is an accepted citizen of Heaven, his 'Country of New Birth'.



Plate 7.1 : Photograph of William's 'Temporary Resident Card' (Author, April 2011)

William's evocation of the 'stranger' can be traced back to 1 Peter 2:11, where the apostle Peter remonstrates with believers that they should, 'as aliens and strangers in the world, abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul'. This passage has been popular in Evangelical circles (See Muow, 2000), and creates a dichotomy between 'the world' and 'heaven', encouraging Christians to keep their focus on the latter. Building on this passage, Butcher (2004:39), a prominent missiological thinker wrote, 'we are all strangers. It goes with the territory. This is not our home and it never will be. This isn't where we'll stop and settle'. Indeed, this sentiment could be detected in several of the missionaries' viewpoints, and clearly influenced their conceptions of home. Andrew, for example, 'never really attempted to make [Albania] my home...I think a lot of it comes back to our theology...I don't think that God ever intended for us to really put our roots down here and to find our security in this life and in this world'. Meanwhile, Kate explained that 'our home is in Heaven, our purpose is there and that will be our destiny. And we feel more connected with our citizenship in Heaven than we do as an American or an Albanian'.

For these missionaries, who focused on their 'real home' in heaven, it seemed that the daily discomforts of 'feeling foreign' were somewhat eased. While their 'human' sensibilities sometimes struggled with the realities of living outside their own culture, they held onto the belief that feeling like a 'stranger' was to be expected as followers of Christ. Beyond which, some missionaries also told me that the feeling of not fitting in was in fact a blessing, because the 'unhomeliness' simply reminded them of the joy they would feel when he finally reached his ultimate home, in Heaven. Rather than try and make Albania feel like home, or for that fact America or anywhere else, these missionaries embraced strangerhood, and avoided 'falling into the trap of thinking this world is our home' (Ellsworth, 2007: 82). This has interesting implications for current scholarly discussions around (un)homeliness. In their seminal book for example, Blunt and Dowling (2006: 132) explain that they are seeking to 'unsettle the distinction between homely and unhomely homes' by showing that seemingly homely places can in fact be unhomely, and vice versa. Yet while this is a necessary pursuit, I suggest that they still uphold 'homeliness' as a universal goal. As these missionaries illustrate

however, this is not necessarily the case for everyone, as a sense of unease can be joyfully acknowledged as evidence of 'citizenship in heaven'.

Concluding Remarks

In this chapter I have outlined how there has been a shift in mission theory away from 'civilization' to today's emphasis on 'contextualisation', and in turn made the general argument that the missionary home reflects this move. I have contended that the missionary home is, in other words, a microcosm of ideas on how mission work should be carried out in practice. Fleshing out this claim, I have examined how the location, size, quality and interior design of the missionary home materialises debates around this 'contextualisation ideal', and also exposed the influence of three external stakeholders including Albanians, supporters, and other missionaries, over each of these. Consequently I find that the construction and maintenance of the missionary home is highly political, as it is not only implicated in, but to an extent constituted by, ideas around mission theory and practice. In contrast to claims that 'the home is a site for material expression by people that is unparalleled elsewhere in their lives' (Dant, 1999: 70) therefore, this examination of missionary homes has revealed an alternative dynamic. Rather, from the house's location, to its architecture and domestic materialities, missionary homes are subsumed into the wider Evangelical project, and held up against this 'contextualisation ideal'. At the same time however, in tracing the relationship between 'contextualisation' and the contemporary missionary home, I have also revealed disjunctures between this ideal and missionaries' lived realities, and how these are negotiated and experienced. This was particularly evident when considering missionary wives' responses to a longing for a 'metaphorical or discursive space of belonging and identification' (Brickell, K, 2011: 27). Finally, I introduced the finding that for numerous missionaries 'home' was in fact Heaven. Tempering feelings of 'strangerhood', this acceptance of, and at times celebration of 'unhomeliness' on earth presents a challenge to mainstream literature on home, which has typically assumed that a sense of 'homeliness' is a universal goal upheld by all migrants.

CHAPTER 8

Conclusions

Fieldnotes, AEP Office, 26th April 2011

Kenneth used the language of migration to describe himself, telling me: 'I'm a migrant missionary. I would consider myself a religious migrant who's moving for God'.

Fieldnotes, Lincoln Center⁴², Thursday 6th October 2011

Sat on the veranda of the Lincoln Center, Seth began, 'you know Claire, I really want to thank you. Ever since we met and you used that term, religious migration, and we talked, you really got me thinking. It's been life changing really. I'm even starting to write a paper on it'.

In the thesis I began by exploring definitions of the missionary. In doing so I found that the creation of cultural and spatial distance between an individual and their own natural environment lies at the core of what it means to be a missionary. Indeed, the modern term 'missionary' derives from the Latin translation of an earlier Greek term, *apostellos*, which literally means 'sent one'. At its heart, this thesis not only found that the nature of mission is bound up in movement, but that missionaries are in turn deeply geographical characters.

Above, I have returned to an extract I positioned at the start of the thesis, and added a further vignette. The first of these details an encounter with Kenneth, a 50 something missionary from America, and the second is drawn from a meeting with Seth, another American missionary and pastor of a church in Tirana. Taken from the beginning and

⁴² The Lincoln Center offers language courses in English and Albanian, as well as Business Training and Art courses for children. Its Director is an American missionary.

the end of the fieldwork respectively, they act as bookends, and demonstrate how the idea of 'missionary as migrant' is not simply a conceptual abstraction, but also holds resonance for the missionaries in this research. In this vein, the thesis has placed the missionary within a framework of migration, and examined the geographical trajectories of contemporary Evangelical missionaries as they move to, and invest themselves in, Albania.

From the outset I have argued that academic research into mission(aries) has taken a largely historical lens. Moreover, where studied, the focus has typically been on the actual work of mission and its outcomes, rather than on missionaries themselves. Indeed, as Hovland (2006: 198) rightly argues, 'the faith and experience of missionaries themselves [have not been] a primary object of research'. To address these biases, I have sought to illuminate who missionaries are, and what actually goes in to being a contemporary missionary abroad. Building on this critique, I also considered how missionaries have only rarely been studied within a framework of migration. To be sure, placing missionaries within a migration framework is an unusual move, particularly given that these characters are, to an extent, exceptional. Certainly, the majority of migrants are not propelled by a religious imperative. Yet rather than seeing this as a reason to exempt these figures from geographical research, I have shown the fruitfulness of engaging with such groups.

This is illustrated in the range of broad contributions that this thesis makes, which I introduce here, and elaborate upon more fully later. First, it has uncovered multiple spaces and scales of contemporary missionary life, currently unaccounted for within research. Second, it has forged original interdisciplinary connections, bringing diverse literatures into conversation, and creating new conceptual lenses through which to view the relationship between religion and migration (as I flesh out further in the following section). Third, in studying missionary lives this thesis has made the empirical contribution of widening the range of migrant actors currently found within literature around religion and migration. Indeed, to date, existing research has largely been

biased toward studying immigrant lives. Nevertheless important insights have arisen from this scholarship, including the supportive role of religious institutions, how faith helps individuals cope with the migration experience and in what ways and to what extent religious belief and praxis enable migrants to embed their lives 'here' while also remaining connected to 'there'. While of indisputable value, I argued however that these foci have produced only a partial snapshot of the dynamic interplay between religion and migration across space and scale. As this thesis has demonstrated, and I will reiterate again, there is more to uncover than the role of religion in meeting migrants' needs, and providing 'refuge, respectability, and resources' (Hirschmann, 2007: 26) alone.

Fourth, in addition to these arguments I contended that a tendency to allow class, work and economic wealth to organise research has meant that the full implications of participants' religious identities have at times been underdeveloped within migration research. In particular I highlighted how studies of 'migrant churches' have not always been attentive to drawing out and exploring migrants' claims to a Christian identity. To provide a contrast to this I emphasised the findings of a recent cluster of work around migrants who conceptualise themselves as carriers of the Gospel message. Looking beyond religion as a source of support or coping mechanism, these studies take participants' religious identities seriously, and in turn unsettle normative presentations of immigrants' lives, and the role of religion in them. Inspired by these accounts, this thesis has therefore made a further contribution, through its commitment to fulfilling Kong's call for 'religion to be acknowledged fully, and in like manner alongside race, class and gender in geographical analysis' (Kong, 2001a: 212). As part of which I have been mindful to listen carefully to participants' religious subjectivities. Moreover, in being sensitive to, and learning about, the world-views, beliefs and imaginaries of missionaries I have sought not to subject them to reductionist arguments, but rather to explicate them within their own right, and then to ask what they bring to, and how they complicate, commonplace ideas found within literature around religion and migration, geopolitics, transnationalism and home.

The Geographical Trajectories of Contemporary Evangelical Missionaries

As I reiterated earlier in the chapter, this thesis has been broadly concerned with examining the geographical trajectories of contemporary Evangelical missionaries as they leave their home countries and make their lives in a new one. It has been attentive to three research questions, each of which emerged over time as I critically engaged with what I heard and saw. The result of this has been a multi-sited and multi-scalar analysis that has moved within and between the geopolitical, transnational and domestic, pulling in different spaces of missionary life. In this section then, I bring together the principal themes and arguments of my research in relation to these original research questions. As I do so I will complement the four contributions of this thesis identified earlier in this chapter, with a further focus on some more specific empirical and conceptual offerings.

The first question that this thesis attended to was, *what are the rationales shaping missionaries' migration to Albania?* To answer this I began by considering the initial stages of a missionary's trajectory, and examined the rationales shaping both their decision to migrate, and their choice of Albania as mission destination. Starting with the former, I drew on life-focused interviews to better understand the motivations that catalysed individuals to become missionaries, and migrate abroad. As a jumping off point I considered how theories around migration decision-making have often been built upon the conception of individuals as 'rational' beings. I argued, however, that their formulation of what is 'rational' has typically been narrow, encompassing only those actions that result in, or are predicted to result in, a positive cost-benefit calculation. Inspired by wider work in sociology on rational choice and religion, as well as scholarship around the 'cultures of migration' I sought to explicate the religious logic, or rationale, that lay behind missionaries' decision to migrate. In turn I found that missionaries spoke to a non-economic conceptualisation of what is deemed 'rational'. By being attentive to participants' own thinking I discovered therefore that their understanding of what is rational is rooted not in seeking personal, material or emotional betterment, but rather an entirely different framework altogether. More

particularly I engaged with the concept of 'the call', and in turn the specific reasons that missionaries cited for answering this invitation to missionary life. The desire to be obedient to Christ's command, a sense of duty to save 'lost' souls and their love of God, were identified as the key building blocks of a 'religious rationale' for movement. By according greater gravity to participants' religious identities, therefore, I have contributed to a lacuna in research whereby the role of religion 'especially in decision-making and the journey, has been generally overlooked by social scientists and policy makers alike' (Hagan & Ebaugh, 2003: 1145). Yet more generally, by bringing together missionary discourse around 'an alternative universe of priorities, values and understandings' (Halfacree, 2004: 249), this research has also demonstrated the need for non-economic rationalities as a key factor in explaining migration, and religious migration in particular.

Still focused on decisions made pre-departure, I then turned to examine the rationales that shaped missionaries' choice of mission destination. In Chapter Four I established that participants were typically called to missionary life before knowing where they would be working. Indeed, whereas for a few participants Albania was revealed to them in a particular moment or event, for the majority of missionaries the decision to move to Albania emerged over time through praying to God for direction, talking to fellow believers and missionaries, consulting with mission organisations and their church, undertaking personal research, and considering the relative 'spiritual needs' of different countries. Combined with the impressions that they gained once in the field, I found that missionaries imagined Albania as both in need of spiritual assistance in and of itself, but also as having the potential to play a crucial role in the larger task of evangelising to Muslim populations worldwide. In light of this, I made three specific arguments. First, that missionaries were initially attracted to service in Albania because of the legacy of Communism and Islam, which were envisioned as both 'dark' and antithetical to God. Second, that the influence of Islam in Albania is depicted in two separate discourses, used at different times and by different individuals, as either rendering the country a 'Muslim majority' or as a 'Third Culture Kid', caught in a tug of war between Islam and the East, and Christianity and the West. Both of these were

presented as justifications for choosing Albania as mission destination. And third, that Albania is perceived as a highly strategic country in the bid to evangelise the 'Muslim world', because of both its geographic location, and the religious identity of Albanians themselves. Consequently, in order to explore the rationales shaping missionaries' migration to Albania I brought into conversation literature around *religion and geopolitics*, *missionary geopolitics*, and the *geopolitics of migration*. This created a fresh lens through which to understand how missionaries' Evangelical geopolitical imaginations influenced their migration streams.

In answering the first research question therefore, I have provided an improved understanding of missionaries' migration decision-making process, as well as uncovering the rationales that shaped their choice of Albania as a mission destination. This approach illuminated a part of migrants' trajectories that is rarely accounted for within wider research around the intersections between religion and migration. Indeed, whereas the majority of studies have focused on migrants' religious lives once they have arrived at their destination, I have unearthed how explorations of the outworkings of migrants' religious world-views should not be limited to life post-departure. Rather, religion saturated every stage, space and scale of the migration trajectory, as the following findings further demonstrate.

Following a focus on the initial stages of missionaries' migration trajectory, I then turned to consider missionary life once in Albania, addressing the second research question which this thesis posed, what are the transnational social relations that enable missionaries to migrate to, and live in, Albania, and how (if at all) do they manifest themselves in missionary life? As I outlined in Chapter Six, the missionaries in this study were themselves responsible for acquiring the means to migrate to, and live in, their chosen mission destination. To achieve this, participants engaged in geographically far ranging fundraising activities prior to departure, attempting to 'sell' both themselves as missionaries, and Albania more generally, as important recipients of financial support and prayer. The result was the construction of a social field constituted by

geographically widespread networks of supporters, each pledging to help facilitate participants' 'migration with a mission'. Far from offering one-off contributions, I found that missionaries formed long-standing relationships with these supporters, who provided regular payments, and prayer support. In order to understand missionaries' lives in Albania therefore, I was drawn to examine the transnational nature of these social relations, and how they became manifest, first, through practices of prayer, and second, via the circulation of opinions around what constitutes a 'good missionary'.

Beginning with the first of these, I considered how mission is understood as a team endeavour, encompassing not only those who 'go' but also those who 'send'. In particular I found that missionary supporters are envisaged as crucial members of a transnational network of prayer. Through the collation of electronic 'prayer letters', missionaries keep other Christians around the world up to date with developments in Albania, and relay information about specific situations, and requests for, prayer. While separated by geographical distance, I found that missionaries believe that through the act of prayer, and therefore petitioning God, supporters are able to transcend geography, facilitating tangible change in the lives of Albanians, and Albania more generally. This finding adds empirical richness to wider calls in migration research for further study into the way in which those who 'stay put' are also implicated in transnational space.

At the same time as geography was transcended through prayer however, I also found a counter dynamic at play in missionaries' decisions over what further news to share in prayer letters (which typically also include more general information about missionaries' lives), and on Facebook. More specifically, I revealed a form of 'performance Christianity' whereby missionaries were consciously curating online representations of their lives. In response to the pressures of perceived expectations, I found that participants were carefully selecting what they shared, crafting their communication according to images of the 'good missionary'. In doing so I have made two important contributions. First, I have revealed ways in which the figure of the missionary is

subsumed within a wider religious politics, and how online exchanges seep into missionaries' lives offline. Consequently I have helped address 'a lack of research into how [ICTs] impact on the religious lives of migrants' (Sheringham, 2013: 59). Second, I have shown how missionaries harnessed geographical distance and used it productively to effectively manage the transnational social relations through which they were able to migrate to, and live in, Albania. This finding contributes to furthering our understanding of transnational lives by highlighting, and in turn destabilising, one of the key assumptions found in literature on transnational migration: namely that spatial distance is something negative, to be overcome in favour of proximity. Instead, this case has demonstrated that the maintenance of 'proximal' transnational social relations can in fact hinge on the creativity that spatial distance allows. Taken together with the earlier point that migration theories tend to offer a narrow conceptualisation of 'rationality', this finding suggests that focusing on exceptional cases can hold the potential to expose unacknowledged assumptions within academic literature.

The third question that this thesis posed was, *what are the perceived ideals and realities of mission, and how are these experienced and negotiated?* Broader than the previous two, this question pointed to a larger dynamic that shot across the research findings discussed in Chapters Six and Seven. Specifically, that missionaries are public figures, whose lives are mediated through the perceived expectations of outside audiences, including transnational supporters, other missionaries in Albania, and Albanians themselves. Building on the insights afforded by Chapter Six's examination of missionaries transnational social relations, and its discussion of 'performance Christianity', in Chapter Seven this finding was further grounded within the space of home.

Being attentive to the porosity of home within geographical literature, and cross-fertilising this with an emphasis on materiality, the thesis has brought a novel lens to research into the intersectionality of religion and home. Using this approach I uncovered how the missionary home is an organ of the wider Evangelical enterprise.

Integrating historical accounts of the missionary home and contemporary mission theory, I argued that a shift in missiological thinking from 'civilisation' to 'contextualisation' has become materialised in the missionary home. Indeed, considering the home's location, quality, and interior design I clearly showed how the material had become a signifier, allowing outside audiences to judge the extent to which missionaries fulfilled the 'contextualisation ideal'. I revealed therefore that the missionary home is subsumed in a wider Evangelical project, and is simultaneously experienced as both a public and private space.

In addition to examining how the missionary home is physically constituted, I also considered home as a 'metaphorical or discursive space of belonging and identification' (Brickell, K 2011: 27). I exposed how the emotional needs of some missionaries led them to try and reclaim the home, as not only a space shaped by the expectations of others and missionary ideals, but also by their own desires. Drawing on informal conversations with missionaries, as well as ethnographic fieldnotes, I explored how emotional difficulties inherent in missionary life are negotiated in practice. Some missionaries temper the contextualisation ideal, using interior design styles and particular possessions to connect with past homes, and create a sense of belonging. This resonates with the earlier finding of 'performance Christianity', and speaks back to the mediated nature of missionary life, caught within and between ideals and lived realities.

Finally, I picked up on the theme of 'heaven as home'. Taken to its extreme I found that for some missionaries, their sense of unease or lack of 'cultural fit' in Albania was a positive reminder that they do not belong in Albania, or for that matter, anywhere else in the world. Indeed a belief in Heaven as a very real entity animated their conception and experience of home on Earth. For these missionaries, while the physical home was identified as an important space of relaxation and safety, less significance was placed on trying to cultivate, using material possessions, a sense of belonging. Instead, they delighted in their sense of being alien, citing it as a constant reminder of their heritage

in, and citizenship of, heaven. This is important for wider scholarship around home which, I argue, has assumed that the pursuit of homeliness is a universal goal.

Directions For Future Research

My research comprised an in-depth examination of missionaries' migration trajectories, moving between their pre-departure decision to become a missionary and migrate, their choice of destination, and the mediated nature of their lives once in Albania. The result has been a very specific picture, yet it has also unearthed some important insights for the study of religion and migration more widely, and cast light on some potential areas for future research. Here, I pause to reflect on four ways in which this thesis could be built upon.

Firstly, it is important to acknowledge that in this thesis I have considered a migration trajectory in terms of decisions made pre-departure as well as missionaries' experiences once in situ. In order to uncover the full spectrum of the trajectory, however, it would also be useful for future research to investigate what happens when, and if, missionaries return home. For example, how do individuals experience stepping outside of the missionary role upon return, and in what ways (if any) do they remain connected to their mission field? Secondly, through this research I have discussed how missionaries' *perceive* they are held to particular ideals by wider audiences, including Albanians, other missionaries in Albania, and their transnational supporters. Given the importance of these stakeholders for shaping the behaviours of missionaries, future research would undoubtedly benefit from involving these actors further. In particular it would be intriguing to explore how far missionaries' perceptions marry with the realities of their supporters' expectations. This would not only add further empirical depth to this existing study, but also contribute to wider research around the role of religion within transnational processes that encompass not only those who go, but also those who stay behind. As this thesis has found however, missionaries' supporters are dispersed not

only around the world, but also across whole countries. Given this particular geographical challenge, one approach might be to use an ICT tool, such as Skype.

Thirdly, a significant avenue for future research into the relationship between religion, geopolitics and migration would be to undertake further research with Albanian missionaries themselves. As I have signposted in this thesis, participants had a clear vision of the role that Albanian missionaries could play in the larger task of evangelising to Muslims worldwide. One potential path for research would be to investigate the fulfillment of this domino effect, and to consider how Albanian missionaries came to be Evangelical Christians in the first place and what role foreign missionaries played in their conversion. Stemming from this, it would be possible to explore whether Albanian Evangelicals share a similar vision of Albania's geographical and cultural significance, where they are undertaking mission to, and if this selection has been shaped within a further religiously informed geopolitical imaginary. In addition it would be interesting to investigate how Albanian missionaries are financed compared with their foreign counterparts, and to ask how this shapes both the operationalisation, and their experiences of participating in, 'migration with a mission'.

Finally, this thesis has engaged with a largely 'closed community', and offered methodological strategies upon which future researchers hoping to engage with similarly positioned groups can draw. Indeed, as I discussed in Chapter Three, the process of accessing, building and maintaining relationships with missionaries was extremely challenging. Subsequently, not only was the operationalisation of the research itself arduous, but the emotional toll it took was significant too. To circumvent these difficulties I employed three main strategies. First, I drew on a method called 'interface ethnography', whereby I hung out in public spaces frequented by my research subjects. Second, I built on the biblical concept of 'man of peace' to identify not only gatekeepers, but also those who were sympathetic to my research. Third, and perhaps most importantly, I carefully recorded the emotional struggle of undertaking the research, and used this information as a form of data. In particular I recognised

within myself a sense of being watched, or judged, which led to a deeper appreciation of the way in which missionaries manage mediated lives, as discussed.

Final Thoughts

I want to conclude this thesis by highlighting one particular interview, held with Brian. During our time together we covered the intimate details of his life, from his dreams as a child to the daily struggles of sharing Christ in Albania, as well as his hopes for the future. He spoke with passion, and had a clear message to impart both to me personally, and in my role as researcher. Reflecting on some advice he received about missionary life, Brian shared with me,

‘one of the mottos was leave your bones in your country....In other words if what I just described to you is my purpose for life, I didn’t come here on some adventure seeking romantic thing to do a little good and go home and retire and play golf. I came here because I’m a part of a cosmic battle between good and evil, truth and falsehood. God honouring and God dishonouring. And I’ve been created, designed, and sent with a purpose. And my purpose is to live my life in Albania and invest whatever I have, and can leverage, to serve the people of this country as much as I can. That’s what its about...As we invite you in to our personal lives, our spiritual lives, we need you to respect that these things are real, we are engaged in a battle between the forces of good and the forces of evil. It isn’t just something to write about. It is real.’

Here Brian was intent on explaining to me the all encompassing reality of God in his life, and implored me to approach the research in a way that recognised this. In other words, he asked that I take his religious identity seriously. In this research I have looked to honour Brian’s request, and have produced a multi-scalar and multi-sited analysis which traverses the geopolitical, transnational and domestic in a intimate portrait of Evangelical missionaries’ migration trajectories. As Brian reminds us however,

missionary life 'isn't just something to write about', to analyse and pin down to paper, then set aside. Rather, the same religious imperative that drove the missionaries in this study will continue to inspire countless others to the mission field, in an ongoing story of damnation and redemption, love and hope.

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Semi-Structured Interview Schedule

Interview Questions⁴³

Basic Questions

Name

Age

Marital Status

Number of Children

Theological Background

How would you describe yourself?

[If answer missionary] can you explain to me what you mean by the term missionary?

What is the purpose of a missionary?

How do missionaries differ from people that simply attend a church, for example?

At what point did you become a missionary? What led you to this decision?

How has becoming a missionary shaped your life?

Have you been a missionary anywhere other than Albania?

Impetus to Move

From where did you move to Albania?

When did you arrive?

Why did you decide to come to Albania?

What factors influenced your decision?

What did you imagine Albania would be like? How does it compare to the reality?

Tell me a bit about what the preparation for the move involved

⁴³ Please note that this interview schedule underwent numerous revisions over the course of the fieldwork.

What did you decide to pack and why?

How are you financially supporting your time in Albania?

How long did you envisage staying when you left XYZ and how long do you think you will stay now? – has this changed, and if so why?

The Move Itself

How did you travel to Albania?

Did you encounter any difficulties?

Do you require a visa, and if so could you tell me a bit about how you go about getting it?

Life in Albania

General

Tell me a bit about what life is like as a missionary in Albania. Do you think it is any different from being a missionary in another country?

What were your first impressions of Albania, how have they changed?

Tell me a bit about what it's like moving to another country – are there things about moving to Albania that you have enjoyed or found difficult? Are there things you miss or wish that you could change?

Can you describe to me a typical day in your life?

Tell me about things that you find gratifying or difficult about being a missionary in Albania?

Accommodation

Where do you live, and how did you find this accommodation? Why did you decide it was suitable?

Can you describe to me what your accommodation is like?

Would you call it home? What makes a place a home for you? If it is not in Albania, where is it and why?

Who do you live with?

Work

Do you have a job in Albania, if so what is it?

What would a typical working day involve?

What hours do you work?

Who decides what you do? Do you have a 'boss' or someone you answer to?

Where do you work?

Who do you work with?

How has your work, or life in general, changed since you first moved to Albania?

How do you think missionaries are received in Albania?

Have attitudes to missionaries in Albania changed since you first arrived?

Socialising

Do you have much free time?

What do you like doing with it?

Who do you like spending your free time?

What's your favourite thing to do in Albania?

How do you keep in touch with friends and family?

Are you in regular contact with anyone else outside Albania? How and for what purpose?

'I Can't Call You a Missionary - Ouch', Focus Group Handout

<http://www.missionaryconfidential.com/i-cant-call-you-a-missionary—ouch>

"I Can't Call You a Missionary"—ouch

April 25th, 2009 § 14 comments

One of our supporters showed up last week. We barely knew her, but she was planning a vacation to our mission field and thought it would be great to stop by and visit. Having gone through this before, we knew the drill what we would be asked and which areas would be key to show our supporter.

Because of the distance from where she was staying, an overnight stay with us made the most sense and we were happy to accommodate. We met up with her and began the tour. First we showed her the church that we work with, which is a Gothic-style, small building in need of repair. Despite the improvements and maintenance needed, it is a beautiful building, complete with stained-glass windows of angels and mortals looking up to heaven. Being American like us, our supporter was astounded by the church, partly because there aren't too many like this in our home state.

After showing the surrounding areas and explaining the spiritual need of the country, we continued on to our house. As she walked through our place, it was then that she made the statement, with a smile, "I can't call you a missionary!"

We live in a small but nice house. We have all the accommodations that we had back in the States (refrigerator, oven, TV, bathroom, etc.), and our view happens to be of the countryside. It's great, and we love it. But it was challenging our supporter's view of how missionaries live. She didn't say it maliciously, and she didn't leave in a huff. She didn't even say why this particular situation disqualified us from being missionaries, but

I know what it was. It was too nice. Not rich, not ostentatious, not even abnormal for the nationals' standard of living. Just not impoverished squalour. The unspoken definition of mission work seems to not include us as missionaries because: a) we do not minister in an open-air situation or in a non-church-like structure, b) we do not live in a tent, hut or a third-world situation, and c) evidently having a nice view to look at is a problem. I'm still trying to find where in the Bible it gives specific lifestyle instructions for missionaries. Perhaps I'm missing something? Even a friend of ours who grew up as a missionary kid in the Philippines told us that his family encountered a similar experience when a supporter discovered that they had a microwave there.

Meanwhile, the reality of our situation is that our location is provided by our church. We are also tentmakers, so our fundraising only covers a portion of our living expenses; we technically make up the lion's share. Our entertainment outlay is non-existent as we don't go out to movies, concerts or theatre; and restaurant dinners are reserved for special occasions, like birthdays. We have not given Christmas or birthday gifts to each other for years. Replacement clothing is purchased during sales. We refuse to go to ministry fundraisers here as they require black-tie expenses. Vacations, few and far between, have mostly been due to the generosity of others offering accommodation

Don't get me wrong. I love living here, and we do have a nice place to stay. God is blessing both us and our ministry, and we are eternally undeserving. But it's not exactly like we're partying or throwing supporters' money at our entertainment. I didn't try to explain all of this because she couldn't see past her perceptions. We'll probably lose her support, even though she admitted that we were doing genuine ministry here and hadn't been deceptive. Maybe there needs to be a re-education about being a missionary today.

APPENDIX 3

'For Many Missionaries, More Tech Means Shorter Furloughs', Focus Group Handout

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2011/januaryweb-only/61-41.0.html?start=1>

For Many Missionaries, More Tech Means Shorter Furloughs

Constant connection keeps missionaries on the field, but has its costs.

Sarah Eekhoff Zylstra | posted 12/30/2010 08:59AM

About a third of all missionaries for Wycliffe Bible Translators use e-mail to communicate daily with friends, family, and supporters back home, according to a recent survey by Wycliffe Bible Translators.

Wycliffe president Bob Creson said he was a little surprised at how much internet access missionaries had, but he wasn't shocked. "One of the people I follow on Twitter posts from remote Uganda," he said. "I get better cell phone coverage in remote parts of the world than I do sometimes at home."

"Technology is changing both the opportunities and expectations associated with missionary life," said Steve Moore, president and CEO of the Mission Exchange. "With Skype, along with dedicated web pages that stream blogs, videos, and provide email notification when a prayer request is updated, and can operate behind a basic password protected secured site, missionaries have many different ways to keep in touch with their family and supporters."

Missionaries today can e-mail or text their families instantly, and much more cheaply, than before, Creson said. That connection helps people to stay longer than they might otherwise, he said. There are also significant implications for communicating with donors, he said.

"Today, with blogs, missionaries are doing continuous updates on what they're doing," said Bergsma, who is a missionary in residence at Calvin Theological Seminary. "The whole nature of communications and what the churches expect from their missionaries in terms of being informed has also changed."

Internet communication can ease the disconnection and disruption that longer furloughs may cause in field work, Bergsma said. "I've been teaching, and I can continue to teach my course while on furlough. I can do it online."

But the ability to work on two continents simultaneously also makes for a heavier workload, Bergsma said. "You're not going to have time for that renewal you were anticipating if you continue with the work pressure just because it's available." Otherwise, he said, missionaries will go back almost as tired as when they left. Missionaries juggling work in several different time zones have to do it faster than before, said Kurt Selles, who has used letters, faxes, and e-mails in his mission work since the late 1980s.

"There's a real tyranny of the urgent about it," said Selles, now the director of the Global Center at Beeson Divinity School. The bureaucracy of mission work can also add to the frustration, he said. Where missionaries used to make decisions on their own, now mission agencies can have a larger voice in the work. And while there's a stronger sense of being connected to those who are far away, there's also less time spent engaging with those around you.