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DEPROFESSIONALIZING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:
CRAFTING FAITH-BASED DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVES
THROUGH U.S.-HAITI CATHOLIC PARISH TWINNING

presented by

TARA LINN HEFFERAN

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**DEPROFESSIONALIZING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:
CRAFTING FAITH-BASED DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVES THROUGH
U.S.-HAITI CATHOLIC PARISH TWINNING**

By

Tara Linn Hefferan

A DISSERTATION

**Submitted to
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in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Anthropology

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ABSTRACT

DEPROFESSIONALIZING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: CRAFTING FAITH-BASED DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVES THROUGH U.S.-HAITI CATHOLIC PARISH TWINNING

By

Tara Linn Hefferan

This dissertation explores how Catholic parish twinning—the linking together of North American and Haitian parishes in grassroots partnerships—relates to “conventional” international development discourses and practices. As neoliberal policies aim to shrink states and expand the role of markets, large gaps in social services provisioning have arisen. In response, non-governmental organizations have become increasingly central to international development and domestic social service provisioning. In particular, faith-based initiatives, led by those without formal training or professional experience in conventional development, have become key players in development’s design and delivery. This has “deprofessionalized” development work, but has it changed its practice?

The dissertation considers the “deprofessionalization” of international development by looking at Catholic church-to-church partnering. Through a detailed ethnographic case study of one “twin-set” in the U.S. and Haiti, the dissertation explores development as it is conceived, designed, and implemented by those outside the conventional aid industry, those not considered to be development experts. Bringing together literatures on anthropology of development, globalization, and economic development, it considers three questions. What is development—what does it mean, how is it constructed, what are its goals—to non-credentialed “lay” developers? What

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relation do private, “non-professional” initiatives like twinning have to the conventional development apparatus? Do initiatives like twinning constitute “counter-development,” or are they merely extensions of the hegemonic discourses and practices of conventional development? The dissertation argues that like conventional initiatives, parish twinning tends to depoliticize poverty, mask relations of power, and attempts to “fix” the perceived abnormalities and deficiencies of those targeted for development. At the same time, twinning does present a development “alternative”, focused on meeting basic needs in Haiti, leveling power differences, and critiquing U.S.-fashioned “over-development.”

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Doug Porritt was my first “twinning” contact in Grand Rapids, and from our initial phone conversation has been a trusted friend and colleague. While not always finding the “institutional support” he deserves, Doug remains a steadfast and committed advocate on behalf of Haiti. He is the reason twinning has such a presence in Western Michigan, and I thank him for introducing me to its promise and its people. I thank, too, Theresa Patterson for her assistance in helping me to understand the history and dimensions of Catholic parish twinning and for helping me to “get around” Haiti in 2001. Bill and Char Baker, and Tom Braak were important people to me during my time in Haiti, 2002. They offered me not only food and housing but companionship. I am appreciative.

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I was first introduced to “development” by Dr. Tracy Bachrach Ehlers at the University of Denver, and her enthusiasm and encouragement prompted me to pursue doctoral studies at Michigan State University. I am glad I did. As a Fellow with the Center for the Advanced Study of International Development, and the Women and International Development program, I had tremendous monetary and professional support at Michigan State. The Anthropology Department also consistently supported me in coursework and teaching, including with fellowships and assistantships. Dr. Lynne Goldstein as Chair of the Department found money to cover a portion of nearly every one of my funding requests (and there were many!). And, I had an awesome dissertation committee comprised of people who only had my best interests at heart: Drs. Andrea Louie, Rita S. Gallin, Anne Ferguson, Laurie Kroshus Medina. How can their seven years’ of mentoring, encouragement, and commitment to me and to this project be properly acknowledged here? There simply is not enough space to express my gratitude for the countless hours they have spent reading and commenting on my work, writing letters of recommendation, offering advice, and extending their friendship.

Dr. Ferguson gave me shelter when I first came to Michigan State and was living in a tent. Over the next seven years, she would continue to provide me “refuge” as a member of the Women and International Development staff. I loved working as an editor at the Women and International Development program, and thanks to Dr. Ferguson’s sensitivity to “women’s issues,” I was able to find balance in my “work – family” obligations. Dr. Medina likewise helped me find balance, by pushing me to meet key deadlines before the arrival of my babies and by understanding how hard it

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can be to get back into the swing after having them. Dr. Medina has been the steady hand, gently guiding me to the people, places, and ideas essential to my professional development. I am truly grateful—thank you.

Dr. Fred Roberts provided an important “kick start” when it looked like this project might stall. His contagious enthusiasm and faith in the importance of this work came at a critical time. Dr. Bill Derman amiably “swapped” classes with me so that I could teach a course I was familiar with; no new course preparations in winter 2005 meant I could focus on writing the dissertation.

I want to end with special thanks to my family. My mother Kimberly Engelman Hall pushed me to follow my heart and do what I love: anthropology. Quinn Hefferan Nordlund and Connelly Hefferan Nordlund, my daughters, shaped not only the course this research took, including its interpretation and write-up, but they have altered the direction of my life. I thank them for allowing me to work, even though they would prefer that I play. And, most especially, I am grateful to my husband, Jerry Nordlund. With patience, humor, and stamina, Jerry has followed me not just around the country but around the world, as I pursue my dreams. Without him and his unconditional support, it would have been a lonely and much less gratifying journey. Thank you.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Conventional development—as both ideology and practice—has been critiqued for its primary “effect:” the depoliticization of poverty, which serves to quell “Third World” resistance to global inequity and economic marginalization. Indeed, some have argued that development is really about controlling people in the global south by labeling them “poor” and promising them a better life through northern intervention into their economies and cultures (Crush 1995; Escobar 1995a, 2000; Ferguson 1994; Rist 1997; Sachs 1992). This control is operationalized through the “development apparatus,” a global network of interconnected ideas, funding channels, organizations, and development “professionals” (“experts”) that disseminates notions of progress and modernity. But, a “crisis” in foreign aid combined with intensifying globalization and neoliberalism recently have led to seemingly radical transformations in international development. Foremost among them has been increasing privatization and NGOization, a shifting of development from a government project to a private one. On the surface, at least, the hegemonic “development apparatus” appears to be mutating into new, fractured, and privatized forms.

This dissertation explores these shifts in development by looking at one increasingly important manifestation of development’s privatization: citizen-to-citizen networking. In particular, this work considers the expanding linkages between Catholic parishes in North America with those in Haiti, as individual parishes form local-level, “grassroots” partnerships that focus on creating and implementing development in Haiti. Motivated by philanthropy, religion, and/or belief in social justice, lay men and women are bypassing the formal dimensions of the aid industry as they directly attempt to

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“develop” the “Third World.” One question that emerges is, what is development—what does it mean, how is it constructed, what are its goals—to these increasing numbers of non-credentialed “lay” developers? That is, how do non-experts understand, define, and design international development projects? And, what relation do private, non-professional initiatives have to the entrenched institutionalized development apparatus critiqued by Escobar, Rist, Ferguson and other anti-development scholars? Do these efforts constitute “counter-development,” or are they merely an extension of the hegemonic discourses and practices of conventional development?

The dissertation explores these questions by looking closely at a partnership established in 1995 between St. Robert parish in Ada, Michigan and Our Lady of the Nativity parish in Verrettes, Haiti. Matched by a national organization known as the Twinning Program of the Americas (PTPA), the two parishes have an active partnership—called a “twinning”—focused on supporting children and education in Haiti. Through regular transfers of money, intermittent travel, and occasional correspondence and telephone calls, St. Robert and Our Lady have crafted a vision for “developing” Verrettes through educating its people. The vision has been operationalized through the founding of a vocational school, a “sponsor a student” project to pay school fees for 200 students, as well as a feeding project to provide hot meals to 1450 kids three times a week. St. Robert also funds a microcredit project, as well as forestry and agricultural extension in Verrettes. Taken together, the many projects St. Robert funds and Our Lady administers in Haiti look very much like “conventional development,” and the multiple challenges both parishes encounter as they carry out these activities echo strongly with those identified by scholars and

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practitioners as characteristic of development initiatives more broadly. To consider whether, in fact, this religious grassroots programming is simply another manifestation of “development as usual,” this dissertation explores the extent to which “non-professional,” or lay, programs reflect, challenge, or render obsolete dominant development discourses and practices.

I carried out research for this project both in Michigan and Haiti over periods between 2000 and 2004.¹ Described in detail below, fieldwork included three separate research trips to Haiti (July-August 2000; May-June 2001; January-March 2002) to assess the scope and details of twinning programs in Point-à-Raquettes, Seguin, Ennery, and Verrettes, Haiti. In Haiti, I carried out unstructured and semi-structured interviews with priests, nuns, and others active in twinning about the scope of their programs, relationships with U.S. parishes, and ideas about development. I also was a participant-observer in parish life (e.g., masses, social events), in twinning projects (e.g. vocational school), and in a mission trip of U.S. participants to Haiti. Finally, I administered a survey questionnaire to participants of the vocational school at Verrettes. The survey investigated ideas about development, job training, and hopes for the future.

As the focus of this project is on the “developers” rather than the “developed,” the bulk of my research was Michigan-based and carried out over two research periods, July-December 2001 and July 2003-August 2004, largely in the greater Grand Rapids

¹ The research was supported by an International Predissertation Fellowship awarded by the Social Science Research Council and the American Council of Learned Societies, with funds provided by the Ford Foundation; a National Science Foundation Ethnographic Training Grant awarded by Michigan State University’s Anthropology Department, and a Ford Predissertation Travel Grant awarded by the Center for the Advanced Study of International Development and the College of Social Science at Michigan State University. Advanced language training in French and Haitian Creole was made possible by three Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship awarded by the Center for the Advanced Study of International Development and Women and International Development Programs at Michigan State University.

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area. I carried out unstructured interviews with those active in twinning in several Michigan parishes, including Holy Trinity, Sacred Heart, and Holy Spirit, and I was a participant-observer in many Grand Rapids twinning activities (e.g., Creole language classes, fundraising events). For the most part, the data presented and discussed in the dissertation come from my work with St. Robert, specifically. I conducted semi-structured interviews with a sample of members of the St. Robert Haiti Committee, and I was a participant-observer in the weekly mass, Haiti committee meetings, and other related parish events (e.g., potlucks, “Know Your Parish” weekends). I conducted a brief survey of Michigan parishes active in church partnering, gathering data on programming, budgets, travels, and the like. The project also draws on archival materials, including parish bulletins at St. Robert, twinning promotional materials, correspondence between St. Robert Haiti Committee members and Haitian priests and others. I discuss my research methods in more detail in Chapter Two.

What is Twinning?

Haiti is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, yet in the “backyard” of the richest. Over the past century, the U.S. government has made multiple interventions into Haiti’s economy and political life (Farmer 1994; Heintz, Heintz et al. 1996; Schmidt 1995), but the rise in individual and “Third Sector” activity in Haiti is more recent (Morton n.d.). Coinciding with an “opening” of Haiti to outside economic interests under Jean-Claude “Baby Doc” Duvalier, as well as the growing *ti-legliz* liberation theology movement in Haiti (Greene 1993), the first “official” church-to-church partnering between Haitian and American Catholic parishes began in 1978 under the name “Adopt a Parish.”

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The movement began in Nashville, Tennessee as a personal “crusade” by three Catholic parishioners—Harry and Alice Hosey, and Theresa Patterson—who believed that their parish had resources and talents to share with the poor of Haiti. In fundraising speeches, informal chit-chat, and in promotional materials, Theresa, co-founder and director of what is now called the Parish Twinning Program of the Americas (PTPA), offers the following account of how she became involved in Haiti. Inspired by stories told by Harry and Alice, missionaries long active in Haiti, as well as parishioners at her church—St. Henry—in Nashville, Theresa made her first trip to Haiti in 1978. She describes the trip as long, difficult, and both physically and emotionally taxing. But, the experience was in many ways life-changing for her, as well. She had a profound recognition, she says, of the universality of the Catholic Church—that even though her life in the United States was so very different from the lives of those she was meeting in Haiti, together they shared a common faith that bridged chasms of social and physical location. Theresa also felt her parish had many economic advantages to share with the Haitian parish, while the Haitian parish had spiritual richness to impart to hers. And, she was thunderstruck by a question: What if U.S. parishes joined forces with those in Haiti to exchange their respective gifts with each other? In 1978, her parish, St. Henry, began a formal partnership with a parish in Beauchamp, in northwestern Haiti, after a series of droughts had devastated the area. The relationship was sanctioned by the bishops of each diocese after Theresa contacted them via letter to ask their permission.

For the next few years, Harry and Theresa together increasingly promoted the idea of “twinning” to other parishes in their diocese. As twinings grew in number locally and expanded to dioceses in other parts of the U.S., and as Harry’s health

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deteriorated, the Haiti Parish Twinning Program (HPTP) formally organized as a non-profit in 1992, and Theresa took over as director. She chose to rename the program HPTP—emphasizing “twinning”—to capture the coming together in close relationships of participant parishes. In 1998 HPTP was rechristened the Twinning Program of the Americas (PTPA), to reflect the expanding of twinning into other countries of the Caribbean, as well as Central and South America (see Figure 1.1).

Figure 1.1: Changing Names of Catholic Church Partnering

1978 known as *Adopt-a-Parish*

1992 known as *Haiti Parish Twinning Program of the Americas* (HPTP)

1998 known as *Parish Twinning Program of the Americas* (PTPA)

In reality, linkages between parishes in Mexico, Jamaica, and elsewhere already had been established by Harry, but the renaming accompanied an administrative division in the organization between twinings focused on Haiti and those elsewhere in the region. The twinning movement has mushroomed in the twenty-seven years since its founding and includes over 660 parishes and programs in North America and Haiti.

As noted in PTPA’s mission statement (see Figure 1.2), the focus of twinning is to “serve those in need in Haiti” by creating direct, grassroots-level linkages between parishes. These linkages are to become “bridge[s] whereby the love of God flows in both directions as parishes learn to care, share and pray for one another” (HPTP promotional materials, n.d.). At an organizational level, this mission stems in part from Theresa Patterson’s rooting in social justice thinking, particularly liberation theology. In discussions with me, Theresa separated the Catholic Church into “conservatives” and social justice advocates, categorizing the priests in Haiti as advocates on behalf of their parishes and Haiti’s bishops as responsible, in part, for the collapse of the liberation

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theology movement in Haiti.² With little support or funding, the priests are largely responsible for finding financial aid for parish expenses and programming. The twinning program, in its mission to be sensitive to differences in power and wealth, emphasizes the “right” of the Haitian priest to direct how monies coming from the U.S. twin are disbursed. That is, priests play the central role in initiating, maintaining, and directing twinning activities in Haiti.

Figure 1.2: MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Haiti Parish Twinning Program is to serve those in need in Haiti by:

- Encouraging *linkages* between Catholic parishes, institutions and individuals in the United States and Canada and parishes and institutions in Haiti.
- Developing *models* for parish actions.
- Encouraging *prayerful solidarity* with our sisters and brothers in Haiti.
- Providing *resources* and *support* in religious, educational, medical and economic areas.
- Promoting an *awareness* among Catholics of the injustices present in Haiti and our Gospel call to respond.

(HPTP promotional materials, n.d.; italics and bold in original)

² Liberation theology attempts to address and reform the political and economic conditions underpinning human suffering. Citing Christ’s work on behalf of the poor and downtrodden, liberation theologians call for the Catholic Church to return to its original mission of confronting authority and injustice. Despite a long history of conflict with the Haitian peasantry, the Catholic Church in Haiti allowed a more liberation-based theology following Vatican II and the 1968 Latin American Bishop’s meetings (CELAM) in Medellín, Columbia and 1979 meeting Puebla, Mexico. Manifested in *ti legliz* (little church) movements and emphasizing human rights, community development, education, and the like, liberation theology in Haiti gained momentum, eventually culminating in the ouster of Jean-Claude Duvalier in 1986 (Greene 1993). Despite the popular election—and subsequent overthrow—of former priest and *ti legliz* leader Jean-Bertrand Aristide to the Presidency in 1991, the Catholic Church in Haiti has tempered its activism and become increasingly conservative. Underscoring this orientation, unlike most nations in the world, the Vatican formally recognized the *junta* regime that had launched the coup d’etat against Aristide in 1991.

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In contrast, U.S. parishes are encouraged to establish Haiti committees to facilitate the twinning. These committees are peopled and generally led by lay parishioners rather than priests. While priests can be—and often are—a part of these U.S. committees, the leaders are typically laity who are particularly interested in and committed to Haiti. Haiti committees work directly with Haitian priests to sustain the relationships, while they also serve as intermediaries between the Haitian priest and U.S. parish. In short, then, twinning is predicated upon the central role of the priest in Haiti and the importance of laity in the U.S.

If the primary mission of twinning is to serve those in need in Haiti by building direct linkages between Catholics in Haiti and the U.S., what is the “meat” of these relationships? That is, once two parishes are joined together, how does the relationship play out? While developing cultural understanding and building personal relationships is an important “voiced / ideal” aspect in twinning, the U.S. parish is expected to provide, first and foremost, some sort of financial assistance to its Haitian twin. The amount of money parishes send varies considerably. In a 2001 survey of twenty-four Michigan parishes and programs participating in PTPA (response rate, nine parishes), I found that all send money to Haiti regularly, with a range of \$1200 to \$18,000³ a year. Some parishes (three of nine) send money simply to supplement their Haitian twin’s budget, without specifying how the money should be spent. But, most send money to support specific projects or activities, with education a priority both in twinning promotional literature and in the Michigan twins’ practice. Six of the nine parishes explicitly list supporting education (through student “sponsorships,” supplementing

3 St. Robert of Newminster—the case study for this dissertation—did not respond to the survey. Their annual budget of approximately \$60,000 per year dwarfs those of other churches in the area.

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staff salaries, sending school supplies) as a priority activity. Promoting better health is also a main concern. Sending medicines is something five out of nine parishes regularly do. Medical missions—whereby U.S. medical teams travel to Haiti to work in clinics and dispensaries—are becoming increasingly frequent. While one of the nine Michigan parishes sent a medical mission in 2001 (the year of the survey), nationwide forty of the 330 participating PTPA parishes did (Patterson, personal communication).

Twinning is predicated on mutuality, a notion that each party has something to offer the other. Respect and solidarity are supposed to characterize the relationship, and one way this is thought to be fostered is through frequent communications with one another, as well as through travel. That is, by developing a first-hand understanding of one another's "culture, customs, and needs," the distance between the parties is thought to be mediated, maybe even eliminated. In short, by getting together and talking, these "sister parishes" are supposed to bond, to take on aspects of committed, heart-felt relationships of familial love. Practically speaking, when Americans travel to Haiti to visit their twins, they are most often shocked by the poverty and "difference" there, a reaction that is thought to translate into a deeper commitment to and greater understanding of Haiti and Haitians. As such, when a church decides to join PTPA (usually hearing of twinning via word-of-mouth, from those already active in the twinning program sharing stories of their involvement), they are immediately encouraged to visit their Haitian twin, a prospect made less daunting because of Theresa's active participation. Not only does PTPA maintain a lovely (and "secure") guesthouse in Port-au-Prince, PTPA also arranges for in-country transportation, provides interpreters, and makes preparations for the stay with the Haitian twin.

Moreover, Theresa usually travels with a group the first time it visits Haiti. In a nutshell, PTPA remedies the practical issues travelers otherwise might face in trying to navigate Haiti alone, allays their concerns about security, and creates a sense among travelers that they are in good—and experienced—hands.

Traveling is something the Haitian priest is expected to do, as well. Priests are to visit their U.S. twins with some regularity, often once every year or two. To my knowledge, PTPA usually is not active in arranging the priest's travel, presumably because traveling to the U.S. is thought to be less intimidating and troublesome for Haitian priests than traveling to Haiti is for U.S. parishioners. Indeed, many of the Haitian priests I know have relatives living in the U.S. and so have traveled here with some regularity. The U.S. parish usually is charged with arranging and paying for the priest's travel. Unlike visits to Haiti, which are typically undertaken in groups, priests usually come to the U.S. alone or with “foreign” (U.S., British) nuns, who serve as interpreters. Because of restrictive U.S. travel policies, obtaining a visa for any Haitian other than the priest is virtually impossible. While learning about U.S. “culture” is often part of the Haitian priest's experience (e.g., attending hockey games, visiting museums, seeing local attractions), the priest's visit is also explicitly about fundraising, about communicating to the U.S. parish the needs of those in Haiti, and providing an accounting of how monies sent are being spent.

Twinning, then, is both an idea—that parishes in the U.S. and Haiti have something to offer one another, can learn from one another, can benefit each other—as well as practice—networks of travel and money, projects, prayer. PTPA claims they are the largest “citizen-to-citizen” network linking the U.S. and Haiti, a fact that has

allowed the program to generate over \$10 million in *direct transfers* to aid parishes, nutrition centers, orphanages, hospitals, catechetical work, education, and economic development programs in Haiti. In the twenty-seven years it has been in operation, PTPA has gradually expanded its reach and its scope—most recently by beginning construction on a hospital in one rural region. It has organized a series of conferences, as well, bringing together twinned parishes from across the U.S. and Canada to share their insights and experiences with one another. Again, the program has greatly expanded in size, as well, with 660 parishes and programs now participating. This means three-quarters of Catholic parishes in Haiti are currently twinned with at least one parish or program in the U.S. (McGlone 1997).

St. Robert of Newminster Parish

St. Robert is a wealthy parish located in Ada, Michigan. An especially prosperous community just outside of Grand Rapids, Ada residents earn comparatively large salaries and live in more expensive homes than others in the Kent County area.⁴ This relative affluence characterizes St. Robert, as well, which the Diocese classifies as a “top tier” parish—meaning it is among the largest and wealthiest parishes in the area (Marston 2006:personal communication). As a whole, St. Robert is very active parish registering 8534 parishioners, most of whom are white and—based on the types of vehicles in the parking lot, the designer clothing worn, and the assessments of the priest, nun, and others—middle- to upper-middle class. They fit with Ehrenreich’s (1990:45)

⁴ The median household income in Ada Township is \$83,357 per year, compared to \$45,980 for the greater Grand Rapids / Kent County area, making Ada one of the highest earning communities in the region. The median housing value in Ada Township is \$198,100, versus \$111,600 for the area as a whole (U.S. Census Bureau 2000).

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notion of what it means in a “cultural sense” to be middle-class: home ownership, the ability to put one’s kids through college, family vacations.

As mentioned, St. Robert has been twinned with Our Lady of the Nativity parish in central Haiti since 1995. The twinning was spearheaded by Cassie Ellis, after she attended a local diocesan function on behalf of one of St. Robert’s other outreach programs. There, she met Doug Porritt, who at that time was volunteering as a PTPA facilitator at the Grand Rapids diocese. Sparked by Doug’s enthusiasm and drawn to Haiti for its French heritage (Cassie has studied the French language), Cassie approached the priest and nun at St. Robert. Both were receptive, despite the fact that until then St. Robert had an unwritten policy against working outside of its local county. The parish felt it was important to prioritize local needs first, and while the decision to work in Haiti departed from this philosophy, it was justified because the “needs there were so great.”

At the invitation of Our Lady, St. Robert sent a delegation of five people, led by Doug and Cassie, to Haiti in January 1996. They spent a few days at the PTPA guesthouse in Port-au-Prince before heading to Our Lady parish. During that time, the delegation asked the priests at Our Lady to come up with a “wish list” that could be presented to St. Robert. They did, and the list was compiled and later published in St. Robert’s weekly parish bulletin. It included a generator, religious education books, stipends for catechists, additional salaries for the parish school teachers, money for two parish support groups, money for a student sponsorship program, a motorcycle for the priests, a school lunch program, and some office equipment. From there, the Haiti committee—led by Cassie—forged a plan of action for Our Lady of the Nativity. Now,

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nearly ten years later and with an annual budget of around \$60,000 a year, the twinning includes a mix of projects and exchanges, which I describe in more detail below.

Our Lady of the Nativity Parish

Our Lady is a sprawling two hundred year old parish in Haiti's Artibonite Valley, and it includes 55,000 people, twenty-one chapels in addition to the main church, as well as six parish schools.⁵ The main church is located in a town of about 8,000, with the chapels in the mountains surrounding the town. Most people in the parish are farmers, have an average income of \$60 a year, and live without running water or electricity.

At the urging of their Bishop, a French priest assigned to Our Lady approached PTPA in 1994, asking to be twinned with a U.S. parish. As the priest wrote, "this parish has never been twinned and does not benefit from financial support for its pastoral activities. [The priests who will be replacing me] are young Haitian priests who receive no aid whatsoever. Therefore, the problem is very serious and urgent." By the time the twinning was established in 1995, Our Lady indeed had three new priests. Father Jean was now leading the parish, and he was very eager to establish the twinning with St. Robert. To launch the relationship, he invited the St. Robert delegation to Haiti in 1996. He was careful not to ask St. Robert for anything, he says, other than to come for a visit.

Between 1995 and 2001—when he was transferred to a new parish—Father Jean was the primary contact for St. Robert, the person charged with communicating the

⁵ These figures are estimates. I have been told that the number of parishioners may be as high as 80,000, with as many as twenty-eight chapels and schools. These inconsistencies also occur in the documentation and correspondence exchanged between St. Robert and Our Lady. I have chosen to present a "mid-range" estimate.

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needs of his parish, maintaining ties with St. Robert, processing the twinning payments, and entertaining Haiti committee members when they came to visit. Cassie and Father Jean had a close working relationship, while other members of the Haiti committee felt confident Father Jean was a “good steward” of the twinning money. While Father Jean told me that communication problems often plagued the twinning, he felt the “relationship between our church and St. Robert is a gift from God.” Before the twinning, Our Lady didn’t raise enough money from the weekly collections “to do anything,” but since twinning, a number of programs had been implemented and sustained.

The Programs

As mentioned, St. Robert’s aid especially focuses on children in Haiti, and its largest single project is the school lunch project, which feeds 1450 students a day, four days a week and has a budget of \$33,000 in 2005. This project was suggested by Father Jean, who during his visit to St. Robert in 1996 spoke often of the need to help the children in his parish. His message was conveyed to St. Robert in the weekly parish bulletin, which announced following Father Jean’s visit,

These children walk two to three hours one way to attend the parish schools (the government does not provide schools in the mountain areas) without breakfast or lunch. Since hungry children have difficulty learning, Father wants to feed the children lunch. Rice and beans are the staples of the Haitian diet. In order to feed the children, it is necessary to have the pots and pans to cook the food and dishes with which to feed the children. Father hopes to use the money that was given this weekend to begin the project (10/27/1996).

He did, and the feeding project is now the largest project St. Robert’s sponsors. As Father Jean wrote in English in a letter to St. Robert, “Thanks to you, the food program that was a dream becomes reality.” Because it is meeting “such a basic need,” as one

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committee member said, it's the project "we feel most pleased with." St. Robert buys most of the food for the lunch project locally rather than getting "lesser quality, but cheaper foods" elsewhere, because the committee feels that local buying "helps the local economy." Father Jean has appointed one woman who is responsible for buying all the food for the project. Each school has a committee of four to six people, who work together with the schools' principals to prepare the food.

Sponsor a student is the second largest project, with a budget of about \$20,000 a year. St. Robert provides students, who apply through Our Lady, with money to pay for tuition, school uniforms, and books. Pictures and "profiles" of students needing sponsors are made available to St. Robert's parishioners, who are asked to donate \$100 a year for elementary and \$200 for secondary students. Those who are interested arrange sponsorships through Cassie.

St. Robert also contributes \$6,000 a year to augment the pay of the forty teachers working in the parish schools. The priests at Our Lady have suggested that the parish teachers are likely to leave their employ unless raises are given because public schools pay their teachers more than private schools. These programs also were developed at the suggestion of the head pastor, Father Jean.

St. Robert also founded and now supports a vocational school in town. Costing \$120,000 to build, the school teaches three programs, which were administered by volunteers from Switzerland under the direction of Our Lady's priests. The largest and most important project is auto mechanics, the second is masonry, and the third is sewing and cooking. The vocational school was the brainchild of one of Our Lady's former assistant priests, Father Alexis, who is now stationed at a parish about twenty miles

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from Our Lady. An automotive aficionado and trained mechanic, Father Alexis was the driving force behind the automotive project, which, like the masonry project, has a three-year curriculum. The two-year sewing and cooking project was initiated by St. Robert's Haiti committee, who felt the school should offer something "for the women." The programs are intensive, with the mechanics and masonry students in class 20 hours a week, and the sewing students in class 15 hours a week. Despite the investment of time and energy, however, graduates of the vocational school are unable to find jobs locally. Perhaps a little defensively, Father Jean is quick to emphasize, "Our job [at the vocational school] is to give information, not find jobs. But, if people have information, it will be easier for them to find jobs." Indeed, with formal sector unemployment hovering around 70 percent for the past several decades (CIA World Factbook 2005), it is not surprising that vocational school graduates are not finding jobs.

After meeting with people at Our Lady who told of the demise of the town's previous small loan project, St. Robert's Haiti committee decided to start their own microcredit project for the area. With an initial budget of \$10,000, the microcredit project primarily targets women, who take out loans of less than \$100 to begin or augment their small businesses. There are typically eighty women borrowers at any one time. The project began in 2000, after Cassie spent several months researching how to run a microcredit project. While the Haiti committee at St. Robert pushed to establish a low-interest project, Gerard, the parishioner in Haiti charged with running the project—who was selected by the priest for his ability to speak English and interact with the Americans—also spent many months researching loan programs. He pushed for a relatively high interest, modeling the project on regular bank loan applications and

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procedures. Eventually, Gerard and an assistant priest came up with a formal application (written in French), an interest rate of 1¼ percent a month and procedures (including an “investigation” of credit worthiness) for securing a loan. St. Robert wanted to offer women “start-up” money for small businesses, and they wanted to provide the area’s farmers with access to credit. Cassie has been very vocal about her desire for farmers to have access to the loan funds. Gerard, on the other hand, did not want to offer credit to the farmers, fearing that farmers would not be able to repay. Ultimately, he says, the farmers did not want the loans anyway, and he is glad about that. “For the past two years, [the farmers] have had no harvest. One guy I talked with said he had to sell a cow to pay a loan. We don’t want that. We want them to have a goat....Farmers want credit, but not for farming. They want it for business.”

St. Robert also partially funds an agriculture and forestry project in the parish, Faith in Action International (FAI). FAI is an explicitly Christian NGO founded and headed by Tom Braak, an American Protestant who says he was “called” to Haiti by God. Through a mutual friend, Tom and Cassie came together over their interest in Haiti. When Tom decided to travel in Haiti in 1997, Cassie urged him to consider working in Our Lady parish. While Tom traveled throughout the northern half of Haiti, staying at most three to four days in any one location, he stayed with the priests of Our Lady parish for over a month. There, he made contacts—aided by the priests—that shortly thereafter led him to settle permanently in the town. St. Robert continued to pay for Tom’s travel and lodging expenses while he established himself and his project in the area.

FLAI is a “typical” development NGO, in that Tom works full-time as its director and employs two full-time staff. Together, they attend development conferences and interact with other development groups in the country. The group is registered as a U.S. non-profit, holds regular board meetings back in the U.S., and produces a quarterly newsletter. FLAI has several programs, including a tree planting project, agricultural extension, soil conservation, some tapping of wells, and microcredit. Cassie researched forestry projects and corresponded with several people in Haiti about appropriate and desirable trees to plant in Our Lady’s region of Haiti. Her work provides some of the foundation for FLAI’s current tree project.

St. Robert considers Tom’s program to be an extension of its twinning activities, since it sustains a portion of FIA’s budget (annual contribution of \$6000 per year). Tom is in regular contact with Cassie and has helped resettle St. Robert’s parishioners Bill and Char, who now spend six months out of the year in Haiti, aiding Tom with his project, as well as administering certain aspects of the twinning projects, including student sponsorships. Tom, however, does not see FIA as connected to St. Robert or its twinning program. When I asked him how FIA relates to St. Robert’s program, he said, “Hmmm. I don’t know that it does. We’re obviously working in the same community, with the same people. But, [FLAI is] working with adults. [St. Robert’s] more the students.”

The Context

To understand how and why faith-based movements—including twinning—have such traction in the early 2000s, it is important to examine their social, historical, and political underpinnings. What emerges from this examination is a story of

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increasing levels of service and volunteerism in the U.S., of shifting social service delivery from governmental to non-governmental entities, and of radical changes in Catholicism that encourage lay men and women to become involved in leading their parishes.

Looking at the “episodic and cyclical pattern” of civic service in the U.S., James L. Perry (2004:168) defines four policy cycles in the evolution of civic service in the U.S. In the 1930s and early 1940s, cycle one was a response to the depression (1930s-1942). Civic service was government-supported and focused on providing employment opportunities for the unemployed, through organizations like the conservation corps. During and following World War II, civic service levels dropped in the U.S. The 1960s gave rise to what Perry sees as cycle two—the response to rising poverty, including to the founding of the Peace Corps and other poverty alleviation programs. In the 1970s, a third cycle emphasized a more decentralized and individualized approach to service, whereby federally-funded programs increasingly were administered through community-based projects. Finally, Perry defines policy cycle four as one of civic service retraction and subsequent re-engagement. In the 1980s, as neoliberal⁶ governments reduced social services spending, financial and ideological support for federally funded civic service programs waned. However, in his 1989 inaugural speech, President George Bush reinvigorated the idea of service in his call for a “thousand points of light,” which was envisioned as “all the community organizations that are spread like stars throughout the Nation, doing good.” This idea was given weight with

6 “‘Liberal’ in the classic sense of lack of state control and reliance on markets and price mechanisms; ‘liberal’ in the contemporary sense of concern for victims, but ‘neo-’ in that suffering is an inevitable consequence of reform and efficiency” (Peet and Hartwick 1999:53).

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the passage of the National and Community Service Act of 1990, which funded the Points of Light Foundation to “engage more people more effectively in volunteer service.”

President Bill Clinton continued Bush’s service agenda because “fiscal shortages demanded innovative solutions to growing....social problems,” says Perry (2004:171). The government was no longer able—or at least willing—to try to staunch the flow of “social problems” on its own. It was calling explicitly on citizens to fill in the gaps, to take up the government slack. To encourage this, the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993 expanded the 1990 law to create a national-level umbrella for service activity. The shift in cycles three and four, then, is one of decreasing government funding for social services and an increasing reliance on volunteer citizens to address social problems—like poverty—through volunteerism, service, and charity.

This trend continues into the 2000s, though with a more explicitly religious tenor. Calling attention to the “good work” that religious organizations do, President George W. Bush in 2001 highlighted what he saw to be a fundamental contradiction in the U.S. social services delivery: in his estimation, the best most efficient purveyors of services—faith-based organizations working with low-overhead and often through volunteers—often were overlooked or bypassed for government funding. Resting on assumptions about the inefficiency of governmental bureaucracy versus the comparatively focused and effective approach of non-profit organizations, Bush explicitly set a goal to “strengthen and expand the role of FBCOs [faith-based community organizations] in providing social services” (Office of the Press Secretary

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2001:webpage). He did this in 2001 by establishing the Office of Faith-based and Community Initiatives to support faith-based organizations' work as social service delivery providers.

In the last decades of the 20th century, then, the political climate in the U.S. has been very favorable to the development of non-governmental social service delivery programs and civic service engagement. At the same time, however, these political trends have called forth—or more precisely, called upon—a sort of patriotism couched in middle-class values. For example, reflecting the values of the middle-class and their economic status, President Bush (1989:webpage) said in his inaugural address:

My friends, we are not the sum of our possessions. They are not the measure of our lives. In our hearts we know what matters. We cannot hope only to leave our children a bigger car, a bigger bank account. We must hope to give them a sense of what it means to be a loyal friend, a loving parent, a citizen who leaves his home, his neighborhood and town better than he found it....

America is never wholly herself unless she is engaged in high moral principle. We as a people have such a purpose today. It is to make kinder the face of the Nation and gentler the face of the world. My friends, we have work to do....

The old solution, the old way, was to think that public money alone could end these problems. But we have learned that is not so. And in any case, our funds are low. We have a deficit to bring down. We have more will than wallet; but will is what we need.... We will turn to the only resource we have that in times of need always grows—the goodness and the courage of the American people. I am speaking of a new engagement in the lives of others, a new activism, hands-on and involved, that gets the job done.

As later chapters will demonstrate, this ethos characterizes twinning, as well, where material comforts are viewed as insufficient for creating rich and fulfilling lives.

Instead, being engaged and committed to creating a better world, to making a difference in the lives of those heretofore unknown frames twinning and motivates participants.

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The milieu from whence twinning sprang in the 1960s, then, has become increasingly vociferous about serving others, volunteering, “pitching in” to make the world a better place. And, these public exhortations have been framed in terms of self-sufficiency, as ways of “giving back” to society by offering opportunities for people to wean themselves from dependency on governments. Moreover, they have drawn on middle-class views of the world as divided into “material” (read: possessions) and “moral” (read: goodness) realms, where service to others is a type of currency to buy goodness / fulfillment.

As will be discussed in Chapter Four, twinning also must be understood in relation to Catholicism. As a religious act, charitable service is something U.S. Catholics (and, as Bornstein [2005, 2001] points out, Protestants, too) have done for at least the past two centuries. Indeed, for much of its history, the U.S. Catholic Church has been especially attuned to issues of poverty, particularly among the urban poor (Oates 1992). But, a more expansive drawing together of churches from the global north and south is fairly recent, owing in part to Pope John XXIII’s 1961 call for increasing missionary work in the global south. The coming together of diverse congregations also owes much to the radical changes that swept through the Catholic Church following Vatican II. As detailed in Chapter Four, among the many significant changes Vatican II brought to the Church, the most significant for this project includes the increasing importance of the laity to church life. Coinciding with an exodus of priests and nuns from their vocations, in many parishes lay men and women were encouraged to and given space to become deeply involved not only as active

participants in mass but in ministry and leadership roles. It was in this context of openness, change, and focus on laity that twinning first emerged.

Twinning is hardly a unique phenomenon, then. Volunteerism, charity, and the impulse to “do good” are tightly interwoven with religion in the United States. In the United States, there are 350,000 congregations, which claim 135,000,000 members (Ammerman et al. 1998). More people belong to congregations than any other type of voluntary organization, and more financial support is given for the work of these religious communities than all other philanthropic causes combined (Ammerman et al. 1998:8). As the global environment encourages more civic involvement in social welfare and less on the part of states, faith-based NGOs have been especially well poised to transfer their organizational and financial strengths into development practice. Jeff Haynes (2001:143) argues that these “transnational networks of religious actors...[facilitated by globalization] form bodies whose main priority is the well-being and advance of their transnational religious community.”

Conclusion

Twinning provides an intriguing entrée into the study of international development’s current state. While much anthropological analysis of development has focused on the formal dimensions of the aid industry—and particularly the discourses guiding them—far fewer works have considered how development is understood, produced, or practiced by those outside the dominant development apparatus. And yet, non-governmental initiatives like parish twinning are increasing both in number and in profile, for reasons discussed in Chapter Three.

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By looking at development's increasing privatization through parish-to-parish twinning, this dissertation examines how development "plays out" among lay practitioners, how lay initiatives relate to more conventional approaches, and whether efforts like parish twinning constitute "counter development" vis-à-vis hegemonic discourses and practices.

To do this, Chapter Three unpacks the larger forces at play in what I call "formal" or conventional development, as well as their anthropological critiques. What is development? What discourses have guided it? How has development been differently understood across economics and anthropology? In addressing these questions, I am particularly interested in discerning this particular "moment" in development—the crisis in aid, increasing privatization, and neoliberalism.

Chapter Four looks in detail at St. Robert, its Haiti committee, as well as individual twinning participants to consider: Who are the people engaging in twinning? How do they participate? What motivates them? What do they get out of it? In what ways do they think about Haiti and twinning?

Chapter Five considers how parishioners at St. Robert's construct development, how they think about it, what they hope it will do for Haiti. Chapter Five asks: What does development mean at St. Robert? Why is it thought to be needed in Haiti? How do parishioners move from development theory to practice? How do they conceive of their efforts in Haiti, as development or missionization?

Chapter Six presents an integrated look at both formal and lay development to consider whether, and if so in what ways, the two share similar discourses and practices. By comparing and contrasting these apparently "different" approaches to development,

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I will consider whether lay development represents a “new” mode of development or if it is simply an alternative manifestation of the dominant development apparatus.

Chapter Six asks in what ways do lay and professional initiatives overlap, converge, and / or diverge from one another? What is the relationship between the entrenched, hegemonic discourses that post-structuralist development scholars suggest exists—discourses that are institutionalized and implemented by development “experts”—and the discourses and practices of those who stand “outside” the “development machine”? Is twinning “counter-development” or merely an extension of more conventional initiatives?

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CHAPTER TWO: STUDYING TWINNING AND DEVELOPMENT

One purpose of this research is to understand how lay initiatives such as twinning relate to conventional development. To do this, I selected one twin-set for an in-depth case-study. Looking at the “operation of the international development ‘apparatus’ in a particular setting” (Ferguson 1994:17), my interest is in the “dailiness” (Abu-Lughod 1993) of twinning, what “lay” developers are “doing”—particularly in relation to dominant development discourses—how they understand Haiti, Haitians and (under)development, what they intend for twinning to accomplish in their lives and the lives of the Haitians with whom they have partnered. This intensive look at local-level discourses and practices—particularly as they are crafted by the “developers” rather than those to be “developed”—is not intended to produce scientific “Truths” or generalizable “laws.” Rather, it is an in-depth investigation of how people give their lives—and “others” lives—meaning, as well as how they act and re-act in attempting to make the world a “better place” through twinning. Through a variety of data collection methods—including, as discussed below, content analysis of archival data and organizational literature (e.g., correspondence, meeting minutes, promotional materials), participant-observation, questionnaires, and interviews—this is a study of the “particular” (Abu-Lughod 1991) intended to capture what is happening “on the ground” (Fisher 1997; Arce and Long 2000) in one particular moment in time. As such, the stories and “findings” presented here may or may not reflect the goings-on in other twinning programs. Indeed, they do not necessarily reflect the program as it is currently practiced at St. Robert. Instead, what is presented here is important for its localness, for

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its examination of the connections and interactions between the “development machine” and individuals seemingly outside its reach.

Understanding Twinning: The Reverse Mission

I began research into these questions in February-April 2000, through a preliminary study of Haitian migrants to the Grand Rapids, Michigan⁷ area. Engaging in participant-observation at a local Haitian church and interviewing a handful of Haitian migrants about their lives in the U.S., I discovered strong connections between the Haitian community and Doug Porritt, then the diocesan director of the Haiti Outreach Project (HOP). HOP, I was to find out later, was the local-level liaison and coordinator for PTPA in the Grand Rapids area. The Grand Rapids Diocese was unique in having a staff person devoted to promoting and supporting twinning at the diocesan-level, which helped explain why Grand Rapids—with seventeen twinned parishes—is second only to Nashville in number of twinning participants.

I contacted Doug to learn more about twinning, how churches became involved, and what the features of these relationships were. In May and June of 2000, I began participating in HOP sponsored activities, such as pancake breakfast fundraisers and Creole language classes. I learned of a “reverse mission”⁸ trip planned for August 2000, and I asked Doug’s permission (as HOP director and “leader” of the reverse

⁷ Grand Rapids is home to about 500 Haitians, most of whom left Haiti following the violence of the 1991 coup d’état (Porritt, personal communication). Unlike Detroit-based Haitian migrants—many of who migrated during the Duvalier era—few studies have looked at the lives of those living in Grand Rapids (see Verna 2000). This preliminary research was intended to make contact with the Haitian community in Grand Rapids and to assess what kinds of questions my research might be useful in answering for them.

⁸ These are called “reverse mission” trips because they are intended to be moments of spiritual growth and learning for those traveling to Haiti, rather than moments of evangelization for Haitians.

mission) to accompany a newly twinned parish, Holy Trinity of Grand Rapids, as it visited its partner Pointes-à-Raquettes parish in Haiti for the first time.

While I attended all preliminary meetings in Grand Rapids to prepare for the reverse mission, I was already in Haiti when the Holy Trinity group arrived, because I was participating in a language program to study French.⁹ I met up with the Holy Trinity group in Port-au-Prince in August 2000, and from the moment of their arrival, I participated and observed all aspects of the trip—including visiting orphanages, schools, and hospitals, attempting (though failing) to meet with then President Jean-Bertrand Aristide (an occasional occurrence on “reverse missions”), and most importantly, making initial contact with Point-à-Raquettes parish, located on the island of La Gonave.

The welcome the Holy Trinity parishioners experienced from the priest at Pointes-à-Raquettes was warm, and the travelers felt humbled by the generosity—in terms of food, beer, and sea-side excursions—they experienced. For me, the experience was eye-opening, as well. Travelers knew little to nothing about Haiti or its history, and yet they were excited and animated in their discussions about how Haiti might be “developed.” One man in particular, a successful and wealthy entrepreneur from Grand Rapids, was continually speculating on ways Haiti might develop: guava production, increasing agricultural production, enhancing factory output. Equally animated were discussions among twinning participants responding to the question, “Are you

⁹ I was a participant in the University of Massachusetts’ “Haiti Today” program based in Montrouis, Haiti. I have studied French for several years, having earned a Bachelor’s degree in French, as well as a certificate in French Studies from Université de Droit, d’Economie et des Sciences in Aix-en-Provence, France. I also have studied Haitian Creole intensively for two years as a Foreign Language and Areas Studies Fellow at Michigan State University, as well as with a tutor in Haiti.

missionaries?” Several participants were adamant that they were not. Doug, they said, was a missionary, but they were in Haiti “to help,” to do something “useful.” At the end of the reverse mission, I was perplexed: was twinning about religion, about missionizing, about development, about cultural exchange?

Finding Parish Partners and Projects

Over the next year, as I refined my research proposal, I stayed in contact with Doug and participated in the occasional HOP-sponsored events. In summer 2001, I again worked with Doug to identify which PTPA-HOP churches would be good candidates for research to understand better twinning and its relationship to development. I drafted a letter of introduction and invitation to participate in the research, which Doug sent to the seven churches we had identified as having both established and active twinning programs. Three responded that they would be interested in working with me, and I arranged with them to visit their Haitian twins during May and June of 2001¹⁰. Working with Theresa Patterson, I also arranged to spend two nights at Visitation House in Port-au-Prince. There, I interviewed her about PTPA’s history, goals, and structure.

I spent a week in each of the three twinned Haitian parishes: Verrettes, Ennery, and Seguin. In each of the parishes I participated in masses, interviewed priests and other clergy, visited schools, talked with parishioners and located projects supported by each Michigan parish. This research was intended to help me understand what twinning looked like in Haiti, what projects are typically sponsored, and how “locals” in Haiti see

¹⁰ Actually, a fourth parish expressed interest, as well, but only after my itinerary and research plan had been crafted around the other three parishes. As such, I chose not to do further exploratory research with the fourth church.

twinning. But, most importantly, in carrying out this preliminary research, I was interested in locating a field-site for the dissertation research: 1) that would offer an array of programming to investigate; 2) where the priest(s) and parishioners would be willing to work with me.

The parishes at Verrettes, Ennery, and Seguin were very different from one another. I began first in Verrettes. Father Jean picked me up from the PTPA guesthouse in Port-au-Prince in the truck St. Robert bought for him. Verrettes is a fairly large town now accessible by a paved highway. It has a grand Catholic church, a large rectory, and lots of other centralized businesses and buildings: bank, gas station, schools, market, stores. There are many dirt streets tucked off the main road, lots of tidy houses in good shape—made of brightly painted cement and tin roofs. In general, Verrettes has an air of relative affluence.

The rectory in Verrettes sits next to the church and is surrounded by a gated wall that blocks it from the view of the street. Three priests were assigned to Our Lady parish in 2001: head pastor Father Jean and two assistant pastors. While Father Jean was always exceedingly cordial, his assistants made me distinctly uncomfortable. The four of us would take dinner together, and my lack of table manners—not knowing how or when to stand to pray, or the proper way to manage the sophisticated inversion of bowls and cups to keep them clean, for example—was met with sidelong glances and a disdain, particularly by one of the priests. The assistants did not initiate conversation with me, and they were reluctant when I engaged them.

By contrast, Father Jean had an almost exaggerated cordiality. He was clearly at ease entertaining American visitors, and he went out of his way to try to make me

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comfortable. He would ask what “project” I had for the day and try to help (e.g., by arranging a guide or interview). He offered refreshments, made sure I felt relaxed in my room, sat with me on the veranda, helped me practice my Creole by talking slowly and with clear pronunciation. In short, Father Jean was very courteous, and he expressed an interest in my research project, including a willingness to host me as a long-term researcher in the future.

The variety of projects established in Verrettes was impressive: the vocational school, microcredit program, student sponsorships, forestry extension. And, during this initial trip to Verrettes, I became acquainted with them all. I was able to talk with participants and get a sense of what the programs did, how they worked. Overall, I felt quite comfortable in Verrettes, excited by the range of U.S. sponsored programming underway there, and sanctioned by Father Jean to return.

Father Valcourt from Ennery came to pick me from Verrettes. Father Val is gregarious and cheerful, almost jolly. Rather than sneering at my obvious etiquette incompetence, Father Val merrily taught me how to cut mango and eat it delicately. I spent a lot of time laughing while I was with him, and he likewise seemed at ease with me. Ennery is a town smaller than Verrettes, but has a hospital (with no patients, at least during my two visits), schools, small stores. The church and rectory sit across from the market. The rectory is quite lovely, and like Verrettes’, is surrounded by an enormous cement wall, though this one capped with broken bottles. A balcony runs the entire second story. With just two priests—Val and his assistant, Father Anel—the parish in Ennery is smaller than Verrettes. The church itself is probably a third the size.

Father Valcourt has a close working relationship with Sacred Heart parish, its Michigan twin. There was a genuine warmth that both he and Pat Abner, the U.S. Haiti Committee chair, exuded when talking about one another. Even though Father Valcourt enthusiastically spoke of anthropology—whose history he traced to theology—he was less interested in the research dimensions of my trip. He was a great entertainer and eager to play dominoes with me, his cook, and the other “help” who live in the rectory. And, Father did help me to explore the community. I was a member of his procession—he had me carry the cross—as he and his assistants walked through town to administer last rites in the homes of the sick. I helped him transport a sick and bloodied man to the hospital. And, Father spoke to me about and showed me projects that he has created with Sacred Heart. With money sent by Sacred Heart, the parish at Ennery has dug wells, supported a medical clinic, sponsored students, and built housing (likened by Pat to Habitat for Humanity).

Father also spoke of projects he would like to initiate: an activity center and an eye clinic. He asked whether I knew of anyone who could come work on people’s eyes. I do not. Father Val spoke of the problems of the aged in Haiti. In the U.S., he says, the state will take care of the old; not so in Haiti. He said that in Haiti, people spend their lives working only to be cast aside once they’re no longer able to contribute their share. I enjoyed Ennery and Father Valcourt, but he was less interested in my research than Father Jean, and overall there were fewer actual projects to explore there.

My third stop was Seguin, which sits in the mountains high above Jacmel and feels very much off the beaten path. In fact, when I first arrived the “town” felt deserted, the town being the rectory, market, church, dispensary, and nearby elementary

school along with a few rows of houses. The church was small and doubled as the school; indeed, it struck me more as a chapel than a main church because it was so tiny and non-descript. The priest—Father Rosemond—was not there, nor was he expecting me, said his housekeeper, Magaly. Before arriving in Haiti, I had had trouble getting in touch with Father Rosemond but thought I had confirmation that he was expecting me.

While I waited for Father at the rectory, I was welcomed by lots of people—mainly women and children, who were both shocked and delighted that I spoke Creole. They showed me around town, and with pride brought me to the new rectory—under construction—which sits on a hill overlooking the current rectory. The contrast between the two rectories was stunning. Whereas the current rectory consisted of three very small rooms—one bedroom for Father, one for Magaly, and one sitting / dining area, the new rectory included four bedrooms and four bathrooms. Whereas the current “kitchen” was a fire-pit in the yard, the new kitchen was enormous and inside the house. Two large balconies overlooked the particularly beautiful terrain. Compared to the two previous rectories where I had just stayed, this rectory was enormous and opulent—even though it was in the “middle of nowhere.” My gut reaction was that the new rectory was ostentatious and scandalously extravagant. I was told it was large in order to accommodate comfortably visitors from Michigan.

Constructing the rectory was the largest project underway at Seguin. Holy Spirit had also sent medical missions to Seguin, and they were particularly interested in bettering health locally. While the local dispensary was closed while I was there, Magaly said that Holy Spirit was going to send her to school in Port-au-Prince to become a nurse and to staff the clinic.

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Of my time spent in Haiti, I felt most a part of the community in Seguin. The people were especially warm and conversational, maybe owing to the fact the rectory was not walled off from the community. People could call to me from outside the window. I was more accessible and so interacted more with “ordinary” people. I spent hours listening to Magaly and her friends singing hymns. I would record the songs on my cassette player and play them back to the delight of the singers. We laughed as they flipped through the Holy Spirit directory and pointed out people who had visited previously, laughing at what they remembered of the visitors’ quirks and peculiarities. But, while people in the community were friendly to me, Father Rosemond was especially distant. Perhaps his genuine surprise at finding me waiting for him in his house was off-putting. Or, maybe he did not fully understand why I was there or trust my intentions. At any rate, he was absent for most of the week I spent in Seguin. He took me on a “tour” of the area, showed me the national forest and the lovely bed and breakfast situated nearby. But, nearly every morning he left in his truck before dawn, sometimes returning later in the morning, sometimes not. When he was there, Father was not overly talkative, and I certainly did not feel he was pleased by my presence. In the end, I decided not to work in Seguin because there was simply not enough programming to investigate. Holy Spirit sent money to Seguin and occasionally medical missions, but actual projects were not directly sponsored. Moreover, while I enjoyed my time with Magaly and others in the town, I did not get the sense that Father really wanted to work with me on the project, even though he said he would.

Having gained a sense for the range of twinning activities in the three locations, I chose to work in-depth with St. Robert and Our Lady (Verrettes) parishes. Our Lady

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met the two criteria outlined above. In particular, Father Jean expressed a willingness to host me and facilitate my research. In retrospect, I think his invitation might have stemmed from a rational calculation about the costs (alienating St. Robert, who wanted me there in Verrettes) versus benefits (appeasing St. Robert and staying on friendly terms) of working with me. Of course, like the other two head pastors I considered working with, Father Jean had no particularly compelling reason to want to invest time in my project. My project, it might be construed, could potentially expose elements of money handling, favoritism, or the like that their U.S. parish twins had been kept unaware of, for example. But, from my perspective, I had hoped that my project could be “useful” to the Haitian parishes. In the preliminary research, I had come across a variety of negative views about Haitians held by U.S. participants—which I discuss in more detail later in the dissertation—that I hoped my project could “undo.” I saw the imbalances between those who have money to give versus those who are in need of receiving, and I wanted to shine a light on the problematic aspects of this. And, I wanted to give the Haitian parishes “useful” research by conducting a parallel study on their U.S. parish partner that would be constructed around their research questions. I stated this to the priests, and Father Jean seemed most receptive to my projects. I also chose to work with Our Lady and St. Robert because two St. Robert’s parishioners—Bill and Char—were preparing to “retire” to Verrettes to help administer St. Robert’s projects, meaning I would have a front row seat to observe how key players in St. Robert and Our Lady twinning negotiated their relationships. Finally, Cassie, Haiti Committee Chair at St. Robert, was especially enthusiastic about the research project and vocal in her desire to work with me.

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Upon my return from Haiti, and from July – December 2001, I attended St. Robert Haiti committee meetings, stayed abreast of committee correspondence via their email list, and attended occasional mass services. I also worked with Cassie to come up with a set of questions she would like my research to address. They were particularly interested in assessing the impacts of their projects in Haiti: were vocational school students finding jobs upon graduation? Were microcredit borrowers increasing their wealth? Were sponsored students really attending schools and how were they doing? During this time, I also conducted a brief survey sent to the twenty-four Michigan parishes active in the twinning program, collecting data on programming, budgets, goals, and the like.

Research in Verrettes, Haiti

I began this dissertation project in January 2002 in Verrettes, Haiti. I intended to explore the range of programming sponsored in Haiti by St. Robert, and in particular to examine the ways “beneficiaries” negotiated such programming and understood development more broadly. As is not uncommon in ethnographic research, I experienced some difficulties in carrying out the proposed research, in part because a new set of priests had been installed at Our Lady after my visit the previous summer. Father Jean was no longer in Verrettes, and his invitation to conduct my research at Our Lady no longer stood. The new priests—head pastor Father Yvens and his assistant, Father Soloman—were reticent about helping me arrange research access at the various project sites. Father Yvens, explained that, like me, he had only arrived in January; he told me that he wanted time to learn the parameters of the projects himself before allowing me access.

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While the groundwork I thought had been laid during my previous visit shifted beneath me, I felt caught off guard. I no longer felt welcome at the rectory, and in particular, Father Yvens was cool toward me. I emphasized that my research was intended to be useful to him, that I wanted to investigate questions that he thought were important, and that would help St. Robert understand more clearly life in Haiti and in the parish. Of course, I understood his reticence; Father did not know me, nor did he know what my intentions were. Knowing the dynamics between Our Lady and St. Robert, I understood why Father might think I was there to “spy” on him, to provide surveillance on behalf of St. Robert. I tried to ease these apprehensions by suggesting that I wanted to help St. Robert better understand life in Haiti and at Our Lady. I wanted, in essence, to help Our Lady move toward greater autonomy from and be more appreciated by St. Robert. While Father Yvens asked how he could help, he was cautious and did not overtly sanction my research or go out of his way to offer suggestions.

My first order of business while in Haiti was to explore the sponsor a student program. St. Robert’s Haiti Committee asked that I help them update their records by locating the sponsored students, taking their pictures, and having them fill out a brief form (which they had written in English) thanking their Michigan-based sponsors. I approached Father Yvens with the list of students St. Robert had provided me and asked for his permission to visit the parish schools to talk to the students. Father said no, that I was not to visit the schools until he talked with the supervisors first, who then would tell the teachers to expect us and make sure the kids were there. There was a “structure” to the school system that must be worked through, Father said. There was no need to

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“rush.” Because there had been a recent administrative division in the parish, some schools formerly tied to Our Lady had been absorbed by a nearby parish—Des Armes—headed by Father Mackendi. Father Soloman suggested I talk with Father Mackendi about visiting those two schools first.

Like Father Yvens, Mackendi was hesitant about assisting in the research, in part by also saying that he was new to the area and did not have sufficient knowledge to share with me yet. But, Father Mackendi went on to caution me about the “difficulty” I would face carrying out my “intellectual study” with “people in the mountains.” Such people, he said, would not be able to give me the information I was looking for. For my project, he suggested, it would be best if I gathered my information from the priests, who could “reflect on and assess things.” Father Mackendi said I could take pictures of the children, “no problem. That will be easy.” But for more than that, I should ask the priests.

With a Haitian friend and my husband, I visited two schools, Allaire and Majen, in search of sponsored students. I had no success. At the first school, the director said that Father Yvens told him to expect us. I asked if we could find the students St. Robert’s sponsors. The director said that the sponsorships money goes directly to the school, not individual students. I asked whether he had a book listing the students at the school; even if the scholarships were not individualized, I could cross-reference his list with mine. He brought out a thick, student-style notebook containing the handwritten names, date, and amounts paid by the students. There were no matches. Looking at my list, the director pointed out names he recognized and suggested those students were at

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other schools, including Majen. He suggested that I go there, since it was only a few minutes down the road.

The school at Majen was empty, as the students had only a half-day of instruction that day. But, I found the director who was somewhat confrontational about “who we were” and “what we wanted.” Explaining that the director at Allaire had sent us, I said we were looking for St. Robert’s sponsored students and asked if he would look over the list of students I had and tell us which might be his. He abruptly said no. He told me that he did not want to provide me any information until he talked with Father Mackendi. He told us to return in a few days.

I immediately returned to Verrettes to meet with Father Mackendi myself. Greeting me wearing a blue “I souled myself to Jesus” t-shirt, Father Mackendi flashed immediate irritation when I told him about the visit to Majen. He told me that I should not return to Majen because he wanted to talk first with Yvens, who—it turned out—had unexpectedly left for the U.S. and would not be available anytime soon. My research into the sponsorship program stalled here. “Stonewalled” was the word I used in my fieldnotes to describe how I was feeling about the research at this point.

While I never did receive authorization to locate the sponsored students, I did carry out other facets the research plan. With Father Yvens’ permission, I was a participant-observer at the vocational school, where I sat in on all classes for training auto mechanics, masonry, and sewing. I was closely associated with Nicholas, the newly appointed Swiss Director of the Vocational School. A white *blan* (foreigner), Nicholas had arrived in Verrettes in January, as I had. Moreover, he authorized my presence there, allowing me access to the classrooms and students, apparently without

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first asking the professors. He introduced me as “Madame Tara” to the students and professors, and told them they should help me with my research. As I was to learn, Nicholas was especially disliked by both the students and faculty at the school, and I think working my entrée into the school through him was a mistake, even though it was the path the priests laid out for me.

The vocational school students, for the most part, reacted to me in two ways: They ignored me or they mocked me. In the masonry and auto mechanics classes, the students tended to ignore me. They would occasionally talk to me, often to ask questions that would ordinarily be considered rather rude: Can they come to my house? Would my husband be jealous? What would he say? The sewing and cooking students were more vocal about their distaste for me. They would talk loudly among themselves about the *blan*—and much of what they had to say I simply could not understand. But, I understood enough to know they resented me and my presence in their classes. Nonetheless, most of the sixty students participating in the vocational school agreed to take the questionnaire I designed to investigate motivations for participating in the school, as well as conceptualizations of development. While I was explicit about informed consent and that they did not have to take the survey if they did not wish, I have not felt comfortable with the high rate of participation. My sense is that some people felt coerced, particularly because they did associate me with Nicholas, the school’s director. As such, I have chosen not to use the data in those brief surveys.

In all, I was in Verrettes from January – March 2002. While I had data from interviews with the priests and others, field-notes from participation in the school, masses, and other local events, and the survey of the vocational school students, I did

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not accomplish what I had hoped in Verrettes. I did not collect the information St. Robert's Haiti Committee asked of me regarding student sponsorship. The priests in Haiti did not invest in my research and were not interested in collaborating with me to design a project that would be useful to them. I did not feel welcomed by the community or the parish. But, what I did accomplish at the end of my stay was a grounded understanding of the difficulties of administering twinning in Haiti. I gained a sense of the pressures priests feel, of their fear of external discipline and "big brother" watchfulness. I understood how important "white" folks are for the continuation of life as it currently exists at the parish, while at the same time recognizing the resentment those in Haiti feel that this is the case.

Research in Ada, Michigan

After a sixteen-month partial sabbatical,¹¹ I undertook research with St. Robert parish from July 2003 - August 2004.¹² I conducted in-depth, taped, semi-structured interviews with twenty-one of the most active members of St. Robert's Haiti committee.¹³ The interviews explored notions of Haiti, Catholicism, twinning, and development, and they ranged in length from forty-five minutes to four hours; most

11 "Partial" in the sense that I was still participating in occasional HOP and St. Robert activities, as well as receiving HOP and PTPA correspondence and St. Robert email.

12 While primary data collection ended in August 2004, I continued to participate in Haiti committee meetings, receive correspondence, and otherwise "participate" in the Haiti committee at St. Robert through May 2005.

13 The makeup of the Haiti committee is rather amorphous. For example, anyone who has traveled to Haiti with St. Robert is considered a part of the committee, as are several people who have simply demonstrated an interest in Haiti. But, since beginning research with St. Robert in 2001, I have identified a "core" of approximately eight to twelve people who regularly attend the committee meetings and provide consistent feedback on programming. These people are the key players shaping St. Robert's twinning. The remaining interviewees are those identified by Cassie as people who are consulted on Haiti matters, travelers to Haiti, and members of the email list. That is to say, the remaining interviewees are "important" to the Haiti program, even though they are not now among the most active in meetings or travel.

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interviews lasted ninety minutes. All participants were informed of their rights as research participants, and each signed a letter of consent to be interviewed. While most “didn’t care” whether direct quotations were attributed to them by name, two of the twenty-one interviewees requested confidentiality. Given the small number of people participating on St. Robert’s Haiti committee, I have chosen not to use individual names when providing direct quotations, except in situations where the speaker would obviously be recognizable or when knowing who was providing the quote was important. All interviewees attributed by name have given consent to be identified. Simply omitting the names of only the two interviewees requesting confidentiality would be insufficient, since anyone familiar with the program would be able to deduce who was “missing” from among those identified. When speaking of the program generally, however, I have chosen to name those most active in the twinning program. Since they are the “public faces” of twinning at St. Robert, these key players’ identities are already known by those in the program. To attempt to conceal their identities through use of pseudonyms would be disingenuous.

I was active on the St. Robert Haiti email list, the medium through which the committee most frequently corresponds. All such correspondence was indexed in a MS Word file. I also engaged in participant-observation at weekly masses, as well as at Haiti committee meetings, writing notes “at the scene” of conversations, activities, and other goings-on. Again, direct quotations generally are not attributed here by name, unless it is important to know who is being quoted or when it would be otherwise obvious who the speaker was. Finally, Cassie, founder and former chair (now co-chair) of the Haiti committee provided me with many written documents (including

correspondence, meeting minutes, budgets, photographs, and the like), which record the development of the Haiti program from its inception until my entrée into the committee in 2001.

Throughout the dissertation, I provide direct quotations taken from interviews, committee meetings, mass, correspondence, and the like. These quotations generally are presented verbatim. However, in the interest of clarity and reducing the repetitions and redundancies characterizing oral speech, I have occasionally edited wording, being careful to maintain the original content and meaning. (See Abu-Lughod 1993:31-36 for discussion about the politics and constraints of editing oral narratives).

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CHAPTER THREE: DEVELOPMENT'S THEORY AND PRACTICE

Chapter Three explores the question, what is international development and how has it been differently understood by economists and anthropologists? By looking at development as a historical process currently undergoing seemingly radical transformation—in “crisis” according to some (e.g., Grant and Nijman 1998)—this chapter considers not only the different ways that scholars have attempted to understand the parameters of development, but it also sets the stage for investigations into how and why “non-experts” now have the space to “do” development.

What is Development?

Development is a contentious term—not only because scholars have a hard time agreeing on exactly what it is,¹⁴ but also because it implies a group or nation is somehow deficient or abnormal and requires outside intervention in order to “fix” it. I am less interested in locating a single definition of development that I “like” than in exploring development as a product of history, the result of the production of knowledge, and situated within networks of power and privilege. This is to say, the overall focus of the dissertation is to explore other people’s development conceptualizations and practices—particularly those within the twinning program—rather than to advance a new or revised model of or for development. This chapter begins the exploration of development by looking at literatures produced by two groups of scholars: economists and anthropologists.

14 A survey in the 1980s located 72 different meanings of the term “development,” a multiplicity that would certainly be greater now since development studies is a more prominent field of study (Riggs 1984 in Martinussen 1999:35)

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The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)¹⁵ defines official development aid as “flows of official financing administered with the promotion of the economic development and welfare of developing countries as the main objective” (OECD 2006). To be considered “aid,” these flows must be concessional and contain a grant element of at least 25 percent (OECD 2006).

Broadly speaking, aid is classified in two ways. First, there is multilateral aid, which is administered through international organizations—such as the World Bank—for reallocation to recipients. Second, there is bilateral aid, whereby resources are directly channeled from donor to recipient governments (Bauer 1995:359). On average, 70 percent of OECD aid is bilateral (Grant and Nijman 1998).

In his tome tracing the history of development thinking, John Martinussen (1999:37) argues that while no general agreement on how to define economic growth or development exists, there is wide consensus that economic development is “a process whereby the real per capita income of a country increases over a long period of time while simultaneously poverty is reduced and the inequality in society is generally diminished.” An important feature of this definition includes its focus on growth as measured by rising per capita incomes.

Indeed, as a “post World War II phenomenon” (World Bank 1998), development has since its inception been propelled by belief in growth, progress, and social engineering (Grant and Nijman 1998; Rist 1997; Escobar 1995). Arising in a context of decolonization and cold war ally-making—and as outlined in President

¹⁵ OECD, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, is made up of thirty member countries, including the U.S. OECD promotes the “rules of the game” regarding development, “good governance,” market economies. See www.oecd.org for more information.

Truman's "Four Point Message" (Truman 1949) —development has rested upon assumptions that the global system is divided into centers of modern "progress" and peripheries of traditional "backwardness" (Peet and Hartwick 1999). The "modern" is characterized by industrialization and democracy, as well as specialization of economic activities and occupational roles, the growth of markets, urbanization, mobility, education, rationality, weakening of traditional elites, secularization, high mass consumption, importance of commodities, technology, exploitation of nature, and the emergence of an intelligentsia (Rist 1997; Peet and Hartwick 1999). The "backward" is not only lacking each of these characteristics, it also is marked by disease, poverty, and scarce education. The frequently stated goal of development, then, has been economic growth to move people from backwardness to Western-modeled modernization.¹⁶

Following World War II, as the gap between the rich in the industrial north and the poor in the south widened, a sense that poverty was reversible—or at least manageable—emerged. Drawing inspiration from the obvious success of the Marshall Plan in rebuilding worn-torn Europe, institutions like the United Nations invested—ideologically and materially—in social and economic engineering, a notion that with the proper inputs, poverty and its associated evils (malnutrition, disease, ignorance) could be ameliorated.

The implementation of such inputs—e.g., infrastructure, health programs, education—was the logical role of states. As such, in the "early days" of development,

¹⁶ Modernity has been conceptualized as "the conquest of nature by the techniques of science, capital accumulation and investment, the users of these techniques being imbued with the values of rationality, work and thrift. The employment of medicine, public health and improved nutrition to eliminate premature death as the normal human lot is central to the modernity project, just as conquering disease and death is an essential part of humankind increasing its control over nature" (Walter and Davis 1998:653).

states and their agencies were to play central roles in developing their countries.

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the UN, World Bank, and other large development institutions loaned and gifted money to states for large-scale development projects: constructing dams, highways, power plants and other symbols of technology and progress. The assumption driving such approaches was that poverty was caused by ignorance, low productivity, and disease, and so by transferring knowledge and technology from the rich to the poor, poverty could be eliminated.

But, despite such inputs, by the 1970s, it was clear that development was not “progressing” those in the global south, as predicted (Sachs 1992; Escobar 1995). Wealth disparities between the world’s richest and poorest expanded, both within individual countries and between those in the global north and south. One explanation for this failure focused on development’s heretofore overly macro-orientation. That is, by concentrating on large infrastructural projects and macro-level policy, development inputs had ignored and neglected micro-level processes and needs. To be successful, development needed to be reformed, to focus more on meeting “basic needs” and incorporating “popular participation” at the local level (Gardner and Lewis 1996; Gardner 1997). This shifted some of the focus for development away from states, encouraging a more decentralized and locally-generated development agenda (Gardner 1997:134-139). This shift was reinforced by the neoliberal policies of the 1980s and 1990s that called for smaller governments less focused on social welfare provision. Concomitantly, such policies encouraged governments to take supportive—rather than “dominant”—roles in development (World Bank 1998:10; Farrington and Bebbington 1993:178). The “New Right” policies of neoliberalism stressed self-reliance,

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decentralization, and the ideal of civilian participation in development rather than government control (Gardner 1997). The emphasis has been on shrinking the size of the state and lowering its expenditures.

In the 1990s, the U.S. Treasury, United State Agency for International Development (USAID), the International Development Bank, and several other large development institutions came together to outline the ways they collectively agreed development should proceed. This came to be known as the “Washington Consensus,” summarized by Williamson (1993) as: fiscal discipline to reduce government budget deficits; public expenditure priorities on health, education and infrastructure; tax reform; financial liberalization so that interest rates are market-determined; reduction in barriers to foreign firm entry to promote foreign direct investment; privatization of state enterprises; trade liberalization; deregulation of restrictions against competition; secure property rights (Williamson 1993; Peet and Hartwick 1999). In brief, neoliberalism encourages a reduction in the role and size of states, but it also emphasizes that states should support market institutions with “good policies,” i.e., those that encourage trade (Kothari and Minogue 2002).

The policy conclusions resulting from the Consensus were the following. States wanting development need to open their borders “and let change in.” They must integrate into the existing global system and “should welcome, indeed encourage multinational corporations, advanced technology, and export-oriented economic activities” Peet and Hartwick (1999). States also should limit aid and privatize their economies. Finally, the market should be free to “discipline” national economies, to reward those with “good” policy environments and punish those with bad ones (Peet

and Hartwick 1999). Importantly, these reforms have resulted in decreased governmental social services spending.

In much of the development literature, globalization is largely equated with both neoliberalism and modernization (Fisher 1997; Rist 1997; Kothari and Minogue 2002), key elements of the Washington Consensus. There is certainly debate about whether the state is, in fact, collapsing under the weight of globalization and neoliberalism. Some (e.g., Putnam in Salomon 2001) have suggested that the rise of states “crowded out informal voluntary activity and left it without a clear social function,” while Salomon contends that “two epic foes” are engaged in a battle over social organization: states and their agencies versus citizen self-organization. And, in Salomon’s (2001) estimation, the “global associational revolution”—the incredible expansion in private voluntary action—indicates self-organization is increasingly important.

Even as disputes over the status of the state continue to rage (e.g., is the nation-state an increasingly weak element in world economic and political processes [Friedman 1994] or a continuing powerful and hegemonic force of social organization and welfare provision [Zaidi 1999]), a more practical question faces development theorists and practitioners: if states are decreasingly “doing” development, who is? With development economists working through institutions like the World Bank and International Monetary Fund to decentralize and deconcentrate states, space has been created for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to become increasingly important players in development design and delivery (Fisher 1997; Gardner and Lewis 1996; Lewis and Wallace 2000).

NGOs are often considered part of “civil society,” or the “sphere of social relations and institutions that exists between the sphere of government and the sphere of for-profit market oriented organizations” (Wuthnow 2004:22). Over the past two decades, there has been steady growth of northern NGOs, while there has been an “explosion” in the number of southern NGOs, with substantial amounts of multilateral and bilateral funds being diverted through them for developmental purposes (Riddell and Robinson 1995; Fisher 1997; Gifford 1994; Zaidi 1999). Riddell and Robinson (1995) identify three reasons for the growth in NGOs, including: 1) increasingly positive attitudes by donors and host governments toward the NGO sector; 2) growing availability of funds from foreign donors—both NGOs and governments; 3) retreat of government provision of welfare services as a result of public expenditure cutbacks and a weakening of state legitimacy in the wake of pressures for democratization.

Salomon (1993) outlines a different set of reasons to explain why the NGO revolution is unfolding now. He points to “four crises and two revolutions” that combined have created space for NGO involvement in traditionally state-led activities: 1) a crisis in the modern welfare state, whereby states are overburdened and unable to meet the demands of citizenry, as well as a sense that too much state welfare breeds dependency, stifles initiative, and undermines personal responsibility; 2) a crisis in development (detailed below), which he attributes to the oil crises of the 1970s, the recession of the 1980s, and skepticism about the role of the state as a capable agent of social change; 3) a global environmental crisis, prompted by wasteful over consumption in the north and poverty in the south, which has mobilized citizens for action; 4) the collapse of communism, which further cemented ideas about the inability of

governments to meet human needs in comparison to free markets; 5) a communications revolution, which made even the most “remote” locations accessible and allowed collective action across wide geographical distances; 6) the rise of a new global bourgeoisie, which wanted more political participation and economic opportunity, following the recession of the 1980s.

Taken together, the various explanations for the rise of the NGO sector point to a growing set of concerns on the part of ordinary citizens, development experts, and states. While in the early years of development thinking and practice, an optimism fueled state-level interventions into disparate economies around the globe, pessimism in later years prevailed as poverty and its associated “lack of freedoms” (Sen 1999) persisted. Moreover, a growing disillusionment about development’s potential to eradicate poverty coincided with monumental changes in the organization of the globe, both politically and economically.

NGOs, then, can be understood as the response and—according to some—solution to the myriad “crises” besetting the world at the dawn of the 21st century. To be sure, some have viewed NGOs as part of an “alternative development paradigm” capable of remedying traditional state-sponsored development’s failures (Edwards and Hulme 1996; Adam 1993; Zaidi 1999). Many development professionals held the belief —“NGO-lore”—that compared to traditional state-led initiatives, NGOs allowed wider and more diverse notions of development, had greater sensitivity and responsiveness to local needs and opinions, and that they could foster alternative visions and discourses (Farrington and Bebbington 1993:180; Grillo 1997:25). Many also believed that NGOs were more participatory, community-oriented, democratic, cost

effective, and better at targeting the poorest of the poor than traditional state-led approaches. In sum, NGOs were supposed to “do” development very differently than states (Zaidi 1999). This was important to those disenchanted with conventional initiatives, given their lack of faith that the state, its institutions, and public policy could address effectively underdevelopment (Zaidi 1999). But, the reality is that NGO interpretations and practices vary widely, making it nearly impossible to generalize about whether NGOs are better at development than others (Grillo 1997:25). In fact, Lewis and Wallace (2000) go so far as to say the label “NGO” is itself “in many ways a virtually meaningless label,” since it encompasses such a disparate array of organizations and agendas.

While the study of NGOs is a burgeoning field in development studies (Bebbington and Thiele 1993; Farrington and Bebbington 1993; Fisher 1997; Lewis and Wallace 2000), projects such as twinning are rarely considered (Bornstein 2005; Tripp 1999). In part, this may be because “faith-based” development undertaken by “non-professionals” does not easily fit within the broader debates in the NGO literature (e.g., are NGOs “better” at development than states? What role should NGOs have vis-à-vis state-led development?) Twinning and initiatives like it are not a part of the “formal development world” (Lewis and Wallace 2000). They do not provide “jobs for the middle-class” (Townsend 1999), nor are they led by credentialed “experts” in the field. Instead, they are spearheaded by ordinary citizens with little to no training in development theory or practice. They typically do not incorporate as organizations separate from the larger parishes in which they are located. In brief, lay initiatives exist largely outside conventional development “NGO” parameters, and this may be one

reason they are largely ignored in the development literature. Another reason may be their very association with religion. As one development scholar told me while dismissing the importance of this project, twinning was not worthy of study since it was simply “old wine in new bottles,” which is to say, merely an extension of larger missionary activities that religious organizations have long undertaken.

This response raises a legitimate question: to what extent are these parish-to-parish relationships simply relics or holdovers of past missionary activity versus something new? Parallels certainly can be made. For example, in critiquing the U.S. missionary surge to Latin America, which began and peaked in the 1960s, McGlone (1997:114) suggests,

many missionaries had gone to Latin America with more zeal than preparation. As a result, too often they lacked the adequate tools for deep understanding of the cultures in which they were ministering. In relation to that, the very generosity that impelled them could also be expressed or interpreted as an attitude of cultural superiority.

As discussed in more detail below, I have similar concerns about twinning, where most St. Robert’s participants do not speak French or, more importantly, Haitian Creole, where visits are brief and “buffered” by priests and other gatekeepers, and where the rhetoric of “cultural sensitivity” is voiced but often not realized.

But, as the dissertation will make clear, twinning is not simply a manifestation of “missionization as usual.” Unlike the Catholic missionary surges of the past, twinning rests not with the priests or other clergy but with lay practitioners. And, while religious motivation undergirds some participants’ commitment to twinning, most engage in twinning not to “convert the heathens,” so to speak, but to put their Catholic faith into practice. Moreover, most are explicit—their goal *is* to “develop” Verrettes, or

at least those within Our Lady parish. That is, development is one purpose of St. Robert's twinning, rather than byproduct of some larger project of evangelization.

The Crisis in Aid

Many development scholars and practitioners (e.g., Grant and Nijman 1998; Duffield 1994; Salomon 1994) suggest that development is in "crisis." In short, the crisis includes declining official development assistance¹⁷ (ODA), as well as a sense that development aid has been ineffective. Or, to put it more bluntly, "aid has failed" (The North-South Institute 1996). After fifty years of the aid regime, "most countries of the world have failed to develop in the modernist sense" (Grant and Nijman 1998:6). That is, they have been unable to replicate the Western development experience or "stages of growth" (Rostow 1960; Grant and Nijman 1998:4). This malaise is captured in a quote by Senator Patrick Leahy, who in 1992 suggested,

[The U.S. foreign aid program is] exhausted intellectually, conceptually, and politically. It has no widely understood and agreed set of goals, it lacks coherence and vision, and there is a very real question whether parts of it actually serve broadly accepted United States national interests any longer (in Nijman 1998:29).

In light of declining official aid levels, aid's "failure" to develop the global south, and the current political malaise, this next section looks at three explanations given by economists for the current crisis: the end of the cold war; the history of giving aid to countries with "bad governance"; and aid's flawed underlying assumptions. The next section serves two purposes. First, it looks at how economists have responded to the crisis. Second, it offers an economic prescription for how development needs to

17 ODA is aid given by a country for development purposes, including both direct gifts and low-rate loans. In 2001, five countries—USA, Japan, France, Germany, United Kingdom—provided 67 percent of the world's ODA.

proceed in the future. As such, rather than giving an exhaustive overview of economic development thinking, which can be found elsewhere (e.g. Rist 1997; Martinussen 1995), this next section reveals some of the assumptions and biases guiding mainstream economic development thinking in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

End of the Cold War

Foreign aid during the cold war was often used to promote and strengthen geopolitical alliances: “foreign aid was used as an instrument of *realpolitik*: it served to keep certain countries within the donor’s sphere of influence and out of the camp of the opposition” (Grant and Nijman 1998:184). More about politics than development, foreign aid was justified to taxpayers as essential for cold war security. As a result, the end of the cold war has, in many ways set the stage for the current questioning of the purpose of aid, and whether it is really necessary to continue pouring money into the “rat holes” of the world, as Jesse Helms infamously put it (Bates 1995:webpage.). The communist threat has ended, so why should states continue to pursue political alliances via development aid?

Yet, despite widespread perception of “aid fatigue”—coinciding with or fueled by the end of the cold war—public opinion surveys completed by the United Nations Development Program demonstrate that support for foreign aid has not significantly diminished in the 1983-1995 period (in Garrison 1998:26). That is, Garrison argues that “aid fatigue” does not really exist; citizen support for foreign aid has remained at about the same level, or even slightly increased, in most OECD countries (Garrison 1998.). This suggests that while states’ motivations for undertaking foreign aid may have shifted away from security concerns, the end of the cold war may have had little impact on citizens’ understandings of the need for aid. At the same time, however, the

report also suggests that most people prefer that aid go to refugees and victims of disasters.¹⁸ Aid for improving health and for protecting the environment is also popular. There is far less support for long-term development assistance, in part because governments in developing countries are viewed as dictatorial and corrupt (Garrison 1998).

In sum, the end of the cold war has signaled a new era in development aid. With the fading of the “communist threat,” a redefinition of states’ foreign policy priorities and goals has been required.

Money “Wasted” on Countries with Bad Institutions

There is no correlation between a country’s performance and the amount of aid it receives. Some argue (e.g., Burnside and Dollar 1998, 1997) that this “random” nature of aid flows has been both inefficient and ineffective in promoting development. Such arguments rest on assumptions that aid can and will work only in good policy environments. Without such environments, aid will be (and has been) little more than extra income for government expenditure.

For example, Burnside and Dollar (1998) identify two frequently cited objectives of aid: 1) To increase growth; 2) To reduce poverty. Using infant mortality as a proxy for evaluating whether aid is positively impacting poverty, they find that in countries with “weak economic management—evidenced by poor property rights, high corruption, closed trade regimes, and macroeconomic instability”—no relationship exists between level of aid and infant mortality (Burnside and Dollar 1998:14).

¹⁸ Aid directed to refugee and emergency relief is growing. The World Bank (1997) estimates that 12 percent of all official development assistance was devoted to emergency aid in 1996, compared with two percent in 1990.

Moreover, because it is fungible, aid is often not used for development but instead is used to fund “the whole public sector at the margin” (Burnside and Dollar 1998:14.).

They argue, in contrast, that when a country has good economic management—as outlined in the “Washington Consensus”—aid does positively impact infant mortality levels. Moreover, they (1998, 1997) argue that aid stimulates growth and improvements in social indicators only in good policy environments. Like the World Bank (1998), Burnside and Dollar suggest that while aid should be targeted to countries with strong economic policy environments, bilateral donors’ strategic interests—including cold war concerns—traditionally have “overwhelmed” the effort to reward good policies with aid (Burnside and Dollar 1997:3). As a consequence, bilateral aid most often has a strong positive impact on government consumption with no positive effect on growth (Burnside and Dollar 1997:3-4). They argue that if aid is to have a large impact on growth and poverty reduction, it must be directed to countries with sound economic policies (Burnside and Dollar 1997:4). In later works, Dollar (2000 in Collier and Dollar 2000:3) suggests that “a clear relationship between the allocation of aid and the quality of policy” has finally emerged. They suggest that the “climate for effective aid is improving” as evidenced by a “clear shift among developing countries in favor of better policies” (Burnside and Dollar 1997:5).

Building on the good policy arguments, some go further to suggest that aid is a real detriment to the poor living under bad governments. “By subsidizing political irresponsibility and pernicious policies, foreign aid ill serves the world’s poor” (Bovard 1986:webpage). Indeed, surveying the impact of aid on the African landscape, Van de Walle (2001:189) argues that aid to Africa has slowed “the process of policy

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reform...protect[ed] and sustain[ed] weak governments...and has actually exacerbated the neopatrimonial tendencies” of government decision-makers. That is, aid does not simply allow governments to live beyond their means, but it provides governments with a ready-made red herring—“the World Bank made me do it...”—on which to hang blame for government irresponsibility and Washington Consensus-styled retraction from service delivery.

Similar observations have been made by Bauer (1991:365): “Unlike *manna* from heaven, aid does not descend indiscriminately on the population at large, but goes directly to the government. Because aid accrues to the government, it increases its resources, patronage, and power in relation to the rest of society.” In this way, the history of giving aid to countries with poor institutions is problematic not only because it is “money wasted,” but also because it has had the effect of sustaining those states’ poor policies while further concentrating the states’ power.

Some suggest that donors must target programs based not only on “good policy” but other factors as well. For example, Devarajan et al. (1999) believe that there are “stages” of reform, which they classify broadly as “pre-reform,” “rapid reform,” and “later stage of reform.” Each of these stages requires a different composition of aid packages. In the past, donors have tended to provide the same aid to all countries, regardless of their “stage” of reform. To make aid more effective, Devarajan et al. (1999) argue it needs to be more specifically targeted. Among pre-reformers, this means technical assistance aid; for rapid reformers, policy dialogue and finance; and later stages of reform benefit most from finance.

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Some take the “good policy” critique one step further, arguing that if poverty reflects government failure (Boone and Faguet 1998:19), then attention must be on government reform. Only the government, not donor aid, can create “development.” Instead, long-term aid has been used to increase the size of governments and civil services (Boone and Faguet 1998:17). Therefore, governments do not require aid to develop. As example, Boone and Faguet cite as “good” government dedication to reforming basic human development (as measured through human development indicators contained in UNDP,¹⁹ including infant mortality) Cuba, China, and Kerala (India)—all communist regimes. Boone and Faguet (1998) make the point that if governments were really interested in development, they would prioritize basic health. They argue such programs are not costly—3.1 percent of GNP in low-income countries—and could bring life-expectancy and infant mortality indicators of low-income countries almost to OECD levels (Boone and Faguet 1998:19). As an interesting aside, Boone (in Boone and Faguet 1998:19) found no support that liberal democracies used aid more effectively than other regimes. Hence, we might conclude that for some economists, “good policy” is not the exclusive domain of democracies.

A counterpoint to these charges—that ineffective aid results primarily (or exclusively) from recipient government mismanagement or poor policy—is levied by Lensinck and Morrissey (2000). They argue that the effect of aid on growth may depend more on the uncertainty associated with aid flows than on governmental

19 The United Nations Development Report (see UNDP 2005) is an annual publication that “measures” and compares development globally. Using the “human development index” rather than conventional measures—like GNP and income levels—the Report attempts to assess how people are faring both within their own countries and vis-à-vis others. Countries are then ranked according to their success in achieving human development.

features. “The principal factor determining the impact of aid on growth appears, in many results, to be investment” (Lensinck and Morrissey 2000:34). They argue that both aid and policy have independent effects on growth. Consequently, the impact of aid on growth will depend on the level and efficiency of investment. Uncertainty of aid flows could have an adverse effect on investment and consequently growth (Lensinck and Morrissey 2000).

Yet, Tarp and Hjertholm (2000) argue that sometimes aid must continue to flow to countries, even when needed macroeconomic reform is unlikely. They suggest that in such cases, aid should be used to support other elements necessary for successful development, e.g., social and physical infrastructure or institutional development. They worry the move toward “good governance” selectivity will exclude the most desperately poor—such as Haiti—from accessing international aid.

In a similar vein, Boone and Faguet (1998) and Feyzioglu et al. (1998) argue that, in most cases, aid is highly fungible, the exception being when small countries receive a large amount of aid. Therefore, governments can simply inter-change aid money for government money—e.g., aid intended for crucial social and economic sectors often simply substitutes for spending that governments otherwise would have made (Devarajan and Swaroop 1998). The “extra” money that has been freed-up can then be used for “unproductive” expenditures, such as military spending (Feyzioglu et al. 1998:29). In practice, then, most development aid goes to fuel consumption, with little invested in promoting economic development. As a result, aid has no significant impact on a country’s growth. “The factors causing high investment and growth in developing countries neither correlate with foreign aid receipts nor are engendered by

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them” (Boone and Faguet 1998:15). In sum, some economists charge that aid allows “bad” governments to sustain themselves, and high levels of consumption, without “advancing” their countries toward development via economic growth.

Assumptions Underlying Aid Are Problematic

Some economists suggest the crisis in aid might stem from its very roots—i.e., the assumptions underlying the whole aid enterprise are faulty. Bauer contends that the “Third World” is merely an invention of the aid industry and that “developing” countries do not really exist. “The Third World is the creation of foreign aid; without foreign aid there is no Third World” (Bauer 1995:87). In his view, the great diversity of the Third World, including socioeconomic, geographical, cultural, linguistic, religious, and political differences, makes foreign aid the only thing Third World countries have in common. Bauer further suggests that aid “diminishes” the global south by implying recipient countries cannot achieve “development” on their own, as the West did. To Bauer, aid is predicated on the perceived inferiority of the global south. In contrast, he argues that many parts of the global south have progressed rapidly; those that have not, he suggests, have had limiting “factors that cannot be overcome by aid, and are indeed likely to be reinforced by it” (Bauer 1995:363).

In a different vein, some have argued that the logic of aid is itself flawed. If aid is targeted to the poor, there is little incentive for governments to reduce poverty (Svensson 1997). That is, because governments are able to collect revenues based on the poverty of their citizenry, reducing that poverty thereby limits their access to these external resources. But, if aid patterns are indeed random, as suggested above, it seems dubious that the poorest countries are disproportionately benefiting from excessive aid flows. Indeed, Israel—classified as a high income country—historically has received

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the largest percentage of U.S. aid. Nonetheless, Svennson's (1997) suggestion is to "tie" aid, or to delegate part of the aid budget to an international agency—importantly, not governments—with less incentive to keep poverty levels high, a suggestion he maintains is against conventional wisdom.

Is There Really a Crisis?

The Overseas Development Institute (ODI) argues (1994:5) that there is wide consensus among OECD countries that the "aid crisis" is really simply a transition to a new pattern of global development. That is, declining aid flows or a sense of aid's ineffectiveness are not so much a "crisis" as an "opportunity" for redefinition and revitalization of development cooperation. This redefinition, ODI suggests, will have three components. First, the rationale will shift to a "human development and security" agenda to promote not only economic growth but also democracy, institution building, and the like. Second, it will focus more on a "partnership approach," with member rights and responsibilities, and mutual accountability. Third, guidelines for resource allocation—that will focus separate additional funds for new claimants and global problems—will exist alongside official development assistance as "real aid": poverty reducing, untied, unpolluted, participatory, and the like. Most importantly for this dissertation, I argue that this transition also includes the increasing importance of ordinary citizens—not development professionals—in designing and delivering development.

Locating the "Aid Crisis" in the Caribbean

Within the wider context of diminishing aid flows, ODA to the Caribbean dramatically decreased in the 1990s, owing in part to its declining geopolitical importance with the end of the cold war. Aggregate data for ten Caribbean countries

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show that net ODA peaked in 1991 at U.S.\$688 million. By 1997, flows had dropped to U.S.\$212 million (Caribbean Development Bank 2000:1). These rates of decline are among the highest in the world, and they reflect primarily cuts in bilateral funding (Caribbean Development Bank 2000:2). In tandem with these lower aid flows, private flows in the form of foreign direct investment (FDI) have exploded—from U.S.\$154 million in 1990 to over U.S.\$1 billion by 1996 (Caribbean Development Bank 2000). Just three countries—Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, and Guyana—have received 77 percent of this FDI, however.

Small countries, like those of the Caribbean, experience more volatile growth rates and are more trade dependent than larger countries (Brautigam and Woolcock 2001). This means that small countries are highly vulnerable to rapid fluctuations in the global economy. Some suggest that because small countries are more vulnerable to external shocks, the quality of their governmental institutions is even more important than in larger countries (Brautigam and Woolcock 2001). Yet, aid flows typically are concentrated on small countries with what economists consider poor economic policy environments. That is, “considerable sums of aid money are being *wasted* in small poor countries that do not have the institutional infrastructure in place to use it effectively” (Brautigma and Woolcock 2001, italics added).

In assessing claims such as these, the Caribbean Development Bank (2000) draws on the work of Guillaumont and Chauvet (1999) to suggest that the most important determinant of aid’s effectiveness is the recipient country’s vulnerability to external shocks and natural disasters. Aid helps recipient countries overcome these shocks, which then allows them to create better policy environments. This is important

to note, they argue, because six of the world's ten most vulnerable countries are in the Caribbean. Their implicit argument: despite what some might consider poor policy and government, Caribbean states should continue to receive aid.

Yet, in reality, owing to the end of the cold war, the increasing importance of "good governance" in aid distribution, and attacks on aid's fundamental underlying beliefs, the Caribbean is experiencing drastic cuts in aid flows. The question emerges, will foreign direct investment compensate? It appears that, given the targeting of FDI to only a few countries, others in the Caribbean will likely suffer overall budget reductions. These decreasing flows are accompanied by the dissolution of preferential markets for Caribbean exports. Currently, producers for preferential markets are otherwise uncompetitive in the wider global market (Demas 1997). As such, when preferences are lifted, ability to sell exports is drastically reduced, further weakening Caribbean economies.

As the World Bank notes (1994), "Caribbean countries have in common a number of stubborn structural problems, including uneven economic diversification away from agriculture and preferential markets, poor macroeconomic management in the three largest MDCs, high levels of unemployment, and an inadequate education system." These problems, combined with the vulnerabilities—to vagaries in international markets, changes in donor policies, and natural disasters—that plague small (island) economies make me pessimistic about the Caribbean's potential to "develop" itself. As will be seen in later chapters, this is the same conclusion reached by those involved in parish twinning.

International Development and Anthropology

While the previous section introduced some conventional economic understandings of international development aid, this next section explores some of the ways anthropologists have approached development. Anthropology has long engaged with, and often criticized, economic development theory and practice; the primary focus of this next section is on recent debates at the intersection of anthropology and development, debates about power, discourse, and professional knowledge to which this dissertation speaks. But first, to provide the context for understanding current debates within the anthropology of development field, I want to provide a brief accounting of anthropology's concern with development.

As outlined above, notions of development often rest on assumptions of evolution along a continuum, with stages of progress mapped with the "backward" at one end and the "modern" at the other. To be modern typically means a group is secular, relies on science, is educated, has a complex division of labor, is urban, and the like. To be backward means to be lacking in these characteristics. Those considered "developed" are modern; those who are "undeveloped" are backward.

At a basic level, such evolutionary thinking would be repugnant to most anthropologists working today. But, to be sure, early scholars of anthropology heavily invested in ideas of social evolution. "Forefathers" like Lewis Henry Morgan and Edward Tyler specified scales of "progress," whereby "primitives" could be measured against western European "civilization" (Langness 1993:48). Equated with children or neurotics, so-called primitives were imagined to be somewhat less than fully human, to

be evolving in the direction of European civilization, but not quite there yet (Langness 1993).

Such blatant evolutionary thinking was largely undermined by anthropologists working in the U.S. in the early part of the 20th century, though more palatable forms of evolutionary thinking were retained by scholars like Leslie White, Julian Steward, and Marvin Harris, as well as certain “development anthropologists.” For example, Allan Hoben (1982:353) suggests that in the early days of development, anthropologists were heavily involved in “applied” development work, and from the perspective of development institutions, this work was to “facilitate the diffusion of improved technology by overcoming resistance to change grounded in traditional values, institutions, and practices.” Many development anthropologists of the 1940s and 1950s believed in and promoted “modernization” (Little and Painter 1995). And, many anthropologists filled this role—The International Cooperation Administration (the precursor to USAID) was once the largest employer of anthropologists (Hoben 1982:354). Yet, many anthropologists resented working under the conditions laid out from them—they felt their roles were not broad enough, that there was not enough time to conduct projects, and that their advice was often ignored—and so over the 1950s and 1960s, most anthropologists left applied development and policy work (Hoben 1982).

But, by the 1970s, a coherent theoretical concern with development on the part of anthropologists reemerged; this new interest—in light of Project Camelot and the aftermath of the Vietnam War—reflected a newly critical orientation in anthropology attuned to the “questioning of accepted dominant structures and ideologies” (Rylko-Bauer et al. 2006:181). This new consciousness extended to anthropological

assessments of development, particularly concern with growing poverty in the global south as a consequence of the fundamental structuring of the capitalist world system (Hoben 1982). From the mid-1960s through the early 1980s, anthropological development theory frequently was framed in Marxist and neo-Marxist terms (Peet and Hartwick 1999; Gardner and Lewis 1996), often referencing world systems theory (Wallerstein 1974) and dependency theory (Frank 1967) to assess (under)development in relation to a global system structured to benefit the few and exploit the many. Peter Little and Michael Painter (1995:603) suggest that anthropologists like Eric Wolf (1982), Sidney Mintz (1985), and William Roseberry (1989)—while often not acknowledged—are key figures in this regard, drawing connections between capitalist relations, power, and exploitation.

By speaking to concerns raised by dependency theory and world systems theory, anthropologists attempted to account for a “political economy” structuring “the production and distribution of wealth within and between political entities and the classes composing them” (Wolf 1982:9). But, breaking from dependency and world system theories, their concerns moved beyond the “structural forces” impacting people—things like their position in the capitalist system and lack of control or access to certain resources—to account also for local-level agency and action (e.g. Peoples 1978; Smith 1978; Morgan 1987). That is, anthropologists attempted to combine a concern for structural forces impacting local people with concern for particular circumstances, social location, and what people actually do.

Within this general climate, anthropologists crafted a litany of “highly critical” appraisals of development. Little and Painter (1995:603), for example, point to those

levied by ecological anthropologists (e.g., Galaty 1988; Posey 1985; Richards 1985) concerned with “the imposition of environmentally destructive, Eurocentric models of monocropping and range management in agricultural development schemes.” They also highlight the challenges raised by feminist anthropologists (e.g., Ehlers 1990; Gladwin 1991; Guyer and Peters 1987) worried about the ways development can particularly harm poor women.

Peter Little in later works (e.g., 2000) distinguishes between development theory and development approaches. He says that concerns like those just raised are theory, in that they stem from and contribute to broad understanding of concepts like “institutions, power, gender, and economy” (Little 2000:127). By contrast development “approaches”—e.g., community participation or gender and development—attempt to apply theory to particular activities or sectors. That is, approaches are concerned with the application and practice of development. Little raises this point in response to what he sees as the “demise of grand paradigms” that accompanied the postmodernist turn in anthropology in the 1990s and 2000s.

Postmodernism is many ways signaled and was the response to a “crisis” in the social sciences, generally speaking. Concerned with power, authority, knowledge, and critical of Enlightenment principles like science, objectivity, neutrality, expertise, postmodernism presented a radical challenge to social science as usual. And, it particularly shaped the work of development anthropologists, who were simultaneously facing the “crisis in aid” detailed above. The result was a post-structural deconstruction of development thinking and a call for the death of development practice, as discussed below.

Critical of post-modernism—in which, among other things, meta-theories and scientific objectivity are rejected—Little (2000) is trying to situate into separate domains the practice of development and development theory. While both theory and practice can be problematic, Little (2000) suggests that postmodern anti-development scholars often confuse the two domains. The result is in an oversimplification that, in effect, throws the baby out with the bath water.

In the context, then, of two crises—in development and in the social sciences—a particularly controversial set of development critiques arose. These critiques, as Rutherford and Nyamuda (2000:840) point out, focused mainly on “analyzing power through the lens of discourse²⁰ and power” (e.g., Crush 1995; Escobar 2000, 1995, 1988; Ferguson 1994; Peet and Watts 1996; Rist 1997 Sachs 1992; Slater 1992).

Specifically, this new set of literature examines

institutional forces, restriction of “voices,” and arrangements of control within the development industry (the array of international organizations and arrangements that fund, plan, and implement aid projects) as well as shows how the people targeted by development are strongly shaped by the identities through which they are imagined within development, even as those targeted (try to) subvert and resist these terms (Rutherford and Nyamuda 2000:840).

Post-structural analyses are particularly concerned with the “development discourse,” which they contend is socially produced to confer meanings to people and their material worlds. Importantly, for post-structuralists, “discourse is not just words....Discourse is not the expression of thought; it is a practice, with conditions, rules, and historical transformations” (Escobar 1995:216).

Drawing on Foucauldian understandings, power in these analyses is understood

20 Escobar defines discourse as “the process through which social reality comes into being....It is the articulation of knowledge and power, of the visible and the expressible” (1995:39).

to be productive; it creates knowledge, discourse, and subjects, which simultaneously (re)produce and sustain power, working in a circular spiral of ever-increasing concentration. As such, power operates not so much through physical force as through the “hegemony of norms, political technologies, and shaping of body and soul” (Best and Kellner 1991:49). In this way, development discourse defines what is rational, “true,” and sane; those who speak outside of these defined parameters are marginalized and excluded.

For example, Escobar (1995:40–41) suggests that to understand development (and how its statements are reproduced), we must look at the system of relations within the development apparatus. He argues that the relations between institutions, socioeconomic processes, forms of knowledge, technological factors, and the like collectively define the ways in which objects, concepts, theories, and strategies can be incorporated into the discourse. That is,

the system of relations establishes a discursive practice that sets the rules of the game: who can speak, from what points of view, with what authority, and according to what criteria of expertise; it sets the rules that must be followed for this or that problem, theory or object to be named, analyzed, and eventually transformed into a policy or plan (1995:40–41).

Here, discourses are used to create and control knowledges, which in turn support the further increase of power.

Applying discourse analysis to development theory and practice, scholars such as Escobar (1995), Rist (1997) and Sachs (1992) conclude that development has been constructed as an object of knowledge. Moreover, according to Escobar (1995:44–45),

development was a response to the problematization of poverty that took place in the years following World War II and not a natural process of knowledge that gradually uncovered problems and dealt with them; as

such, it must be seen as a historical construct that provides a space in which poor countries are known, specified, and intervened upon.

That is, Western models of development resulted from the creation of a constructed and specialized knowledge about the global south, one predicated upon notions of poverty and the need to correct its “abnormalities” (e.g., illiteracy, overpopulation). By institutionalizing a cadre of “experts” uniquely qualified to address the “problem” of underdevelopment, a position was created for the exercise of power over that object, here the global south.

Despite insinuations of difference, all development practice is essentially ruled **by** the same “set of statements” (Sachs 1992; Escobar 1995; Rist 1997). Underpinned **by** an (neo)evolutionary conceptualization of “progress,” placing the West at the “**advanced**” stage and the rest as struggling to get there, this development discourse is **marked** by a preoccupation with (abnormal) poverty and its elimination via the rational, **technological** application of (Western) scientific knowledge. Knowledge liberates **people**. Moreover, urbanization and industrialization are inevitable and necessary **components** of development, though dependent upon capital investment.

Given this view, some post-structuralists argue that development was—and **continues** to be for the most part—“a top-down, ethnocentric, and technocratic **approach**, which treated people and cultures as abstract concepts, statistical figures to be **moved** up and down in the charts of ‘progress’” (Escobar 1995:44). Indeed, the **development** apparatus, mired in “scientific” economic theory and praxis, operates **according** to an invented understanding of “poverty” at the same time it embraces a **myth** of modernization (Sachs 1992; Escobar 1995). Escobar (1995:23) suggests that **the development** discourse is so pervasive that the global south can scarcely be thought

about in any other terms than its essential trait: poverty. In short, some discourse analysts argue that development has been and continues to be only about economic growth underwritten by “faith” in modernization (Rist 1997). Growth and modernization further are linked to industrialization, accumulation, competitive advantage, technological sophistication, urbanization, high levels of consumption, and international trade (Escobar 1995; Rist 1997).

Echoing the sentiments raised earlier by economists in response to the aid crisis, Wolfgang Sachs (1992:1) declared, “Delusion and disappointment, failures and crimes have been the steady companions of development and they tell a coming story: it did not work....Development has grown obsolete.” These post-structuralists argue that it is time to write development’s “obituary” (Sachs 1992:1). In the introduction to the Development Dictionary, Sachs outlines four reasons for the death of development. First, the supposed “superiority” of the industrialized north has been exposed as a sham. With ecological destruction rampant and irreversible, the north no longer can be hailed as a model of advancement. Second, with the end of the cold war, the ideological justification for development no longer exists—a point made earlier in discussing the current crisis in aid. Third, the gaps between the rich and poor—both within and between—countries has risen dramatically since the dawn of the development age, and it continues to rise. Fourth, development’s “hidden agenda,” i.e., westernization of the globe, has been exposed as the cause for loss of diversity and the disappearance of the “other” (Sachs 1992:1-4). As Sachs makes clear, some post-structural development scholars are not interested in reforming development; they are interested in burying it, for good.

Responding to post-structural discourse analysts like Escobar (1995), Rist (1997) and Sachs (1992) who believe there is *a* development discourse that directs all development knowledge and practice, other post-structural scholars (e.g., see Arce and Long 2000b; Gardner and Lewis 1997; Grillo and Stirrat 1997)—who for ease of clarification I will situate in this debate as “anthropology of development” post-structuralists—have questioned the notion that a single discourse generates all development theory and practice. While anthropology of development embraces discourse as vital to understanding the creation and transmission of development knowledge and power, it also suggests that some discourse analysis—like that outlined above—has gone to the extreme by ignoring and telescoping great diversity in development theory and practice in order to construct a coherent narrative of development’s failures. In reality, while a single discourse may be hegemonic, it is always subject to multiple challenges, while at the same time open to multifarious interpretations.

For example, Grillo (1997:21) suggests that development knowledge is not usually a single set of ideas and assumptions. “While it may function hegemonically, it is also created and recreated by multiple agents, who often have very different understandings of their work” (Grillo 1997:21). He labels the assumption that development is a monolithic enterprise the “myth of development,” and he claims that this myth pervades much critical writing in the field. Citing Escobar as an example, Grillo (1997:21) says that the myth is based on poor or partial history, lack of knowledge of colonization and decolonization, and is ethnocentric, a view from North America grounded in “victim culture.”

Similarly, Gardner argues that ideological positions and meanings given to development are fluid, mixed, and continually shifting, and they will “vary internally according to what [people] are doing, when and where they are doing it, and to whom they are talking” (Gardner 1997:145). Rather than one discrete definition of development, the majority of people hold several at once. As such, development is better understood as ever-changing discourses, as knowledges and practices endlessly interlinked, negotiated, and dynamic (Gardner 1997). Gardner argues that in order to see how discourse is produced through everyday conditions and activities—and therefore subject to change and to the agency of individuals—scholars have to look at discourse as practice, rather than as a systematized body of knowledge (Gardner 1997:154).

Others argue similarly: “Discourse cannot be viewed as distinct from specific, situated practices....Discourse is itself a form of practice, entailing the active production of interpretations of specific problematics by making specific connections between concepts and empirical reality” (Nuijten 1992). Like Grillo and Gardner, Nuijten suggests that while dominant discourses are at play, they also are changed, diverted, and neutralized in interpretation and practice. So, while Nuijten agrees that belief in growth and modernization continue to guide much development theory and practice, she also suggests that development is subject to multiple, divergent, and sometimes conflicting interpretations and constructions. Moreover, the hegemony of modernization does not and cannot exclude the many other paradigms, theories, and models that also guide development.

Agreeing that new practices and knowledges can be and are introduced into the hegemonic discourse, and therefore have potential to alter development, Gardner and Lewis (1996) also suggest that development is not monolithic. “Although structured by relations of power in which particular countries, institutions and groups dominate, development practice and policy are increasingly heterogeneous, and are constantly challenged from more ‘radical’ positions by people working both within and outside mainstream development institutions” (Gardner and Lewis 1996:103). As such, development is comprised of a variety of countervailing perspectives and practices, as well as multiplicity of voices.

Norman Long (1992:165) says that discourse is a useful concept because it provides an understanding of the modes of action and cognition that actors construct over time and in particular contexts. To understand these constructions requires taking account of the negotiations, manipulations, and accommodations made between actors. For Long, all discourse is realized as event, and so discourse involves a continuous practical engagement with the material and social world (1992:166). Discourse, he argues, is not a tangible or objective substance that can be measured; rather, it can only be described in relation to what people say about their motivations, actions, and statements, and how we observe the negotiations taking place. “Interpreting discourse in this way enables us to examine how local actors use and assign meaning to their material and social world” (1992:167).

In later critiques, Long teams with Arce (Arce and Long 2000) to argue that many post-structural development scholars fail to grasp “diverse and discontinuous configurations of knowledge” (Arce and Long 2000:24). That is, despite the horizons

of understanding opened to us through discourse analysis, ultimately Escobar (and others like him) falsely reduce development to a monolithic knowledge and practice while emphasizing how individuals are constituted as subjects—how power and knowledge combine to create discourses that craft people, setting limits to what they can think and feel, defining what is rational, and what is possible. Post-structuralism is not about agency but rather about how external forces mold and shape people (and institutions), forcing them in line with particular relationships of power and social control. In contrast, Arce and Long (2000) insist that development is really a complex site of contestation, where actors battle to create meaning. Actors necessarily will understand development in diverse terms and will interact with it in ways that mutate the original hopes and goals of development implementers and practitioners. The ideas raised by Little (2000) above—his attempt to distinguish between development approaches and theory—is important to mention again here. Little wants to draw a distinction between anthropologists “doing” development within institutions like the World Bank and those purely theorizing it, like Wolf and Mintz. While he, along with others like Gardner (1996), ultimately rejects the divide between applied and theoretical development anthropology as untenable, Little wants to highlight the contributions that anthropologists have made to theorizing development, outside the reach of the “development machine.” For example, he discusses in detail how ethnographic studies of intrahousehold relations, common property systems, and informal economies have generated important theoretical insights apart from “practical involvement in projects and programs” (Little 2000:122). This idea is important, for at the very least it suggests that even if a hegemonic discourse has guided development *practice*, anthropological

development *theory* has stood apart from that discourse, to some degree. Moreover, it allows for the possibility that specific practices, or approaches, might have been deployed to oppose or undermine the problematic growth-oriented discourses that post-structuralists have identified.

For example, one approach sometimes used to contest the assertion that all development is ruled by a focus on growth and notion of poverty is participatory development (e.g., Ferguson and Derman 2000). While diverse in content and scope, participatory development usually has some focus on “empowering” local-level beneficiaries (as opposed to formulating macro policy) to be active agents in their own development (Chambers 1997). As Peters (2000:6) notes, “participation ideally connotes the ability of people to share, influence, or control design, decision making, and authority in development projects and programs that affect their lives and resources.” And, as Hickey and Mohan (2004:4) note, “participation essentially concerns the exercise of popular agency in relation to development...and recognizing existing capacities of people as claims-making agents.” In practical terms, participatory development is supposed to be “bottom-up, people-centered, process-oriented, and ‘alternative’” compared to the “top-down, technocratic, blueprint planning of state-led modernization” (Hickey and Mohan 2004:4). That is, it should allow for alternatives to the dominant discourses identified by post-structuralists scholars.

Participatory development has been fashionable to varying degrees in the current post-World War II development era: popular in the 1950s and 60s “community development schemes,” and in the 1970s, with its focus on basic needs and bottom up approaches (Peters 2000). In the 1990s and early 2000s, participation has become

particularly fashionable, especially in relation to “human rights, democratization, civil society, and popular social movements” (Peters 2000:6). Participatory methods and techniques, like NGOs, have become the darlings of the development world—highly visible and potentially “revolutionary.” One explanation for this involves the supposedly more efficient and therefore more successful results of participatory techniques vis-à-vis top down approaches. By getting local communities to “own” particular projects, to conceive of and administer them themselves, projects are less likely to be resisted and more likely to be culturally appropriate. Moreover, projects can be implemented more cheaply, since people are donating their own time, labor, and talents in pursuit of self-identified goals.

Yet, participatory development is not without its critics. For example, in their edited volume, Bill Cooke and Uma Kothari (2001) argue that participatory development approaches often fail to address issues of power and politics, and that they themselves often are reduced to techniques and technical approaches that ultimately depoliticize poverty. Majid Rahnema (1992) contends that PAR, with its focus on Freirean “consciousness raising,” rests on problematic divisions between intellectuals and activists who are promoting the “raising” and the locals who are being conscientized; the developmentalist perspectives of the “experts” remain unexamined while those of the poor and powerless are targeted for transformation. In simple terms, Chambers (2005:102) outlines some of the other concerns raised by critiques of participation as “who participates, where, when, with whom, and with what equality.” That is, participatory strategies might be subject to the conflicting agendas of multiple participants, take place in areas where not everyone has equal access, with only a sub-

set of “intended beneficiaries,” and perhaps could fuel great inequality in communities by targeting some for inclusion and denying it to others. These ideas about participation, its problems, and its promise are intimately tied to notions of twinning and its potential as a transformative project, and as such, are discussed in more detail later in the dissertation.

Conclusion

Currently, states are encouraged to adopt practices of “good governance” that include an emphasis on trade, privatization, and reduced government spending. Moreover, states that fail to meet these good governance criteria are excluded from formal aid regimes. The present moment is also, some suggest, an era of “crisis,” where aid’s purpose is being questioned and its efficacy scrutinized, with overall official development aid flows in decline, especially to the Caribbean. Yet, according to official “measures”—which, it must be noted, are critiqued by anti-development scholars—worldwide poverty continues to grow and vast numbers of the world’s population live without basic human rights. Some (e.g., see Farmer et al. 2003)—including many twinning participants—perceive a gap between the global south’s “need” for development aid and the ability or willingness of official aid regimes to effectively deliver that aid. This is the niche lay developers are filling.

Lay developers, like those of the twinning program, have “space” at this historical juncture to become crafters and implementers of development. Not only are they stepping in to fill the roles states once were encouraged to play, lay developers are focusing on countries—like Haiti—that are increasingly marginalized from official development aid regimes. While many post-structural and anthropology of

development scholars agree conventional development initiatives often have been problematic—serving to depoliticize poverty while maintaining a sort of administrative control of the global south by the north—and while they also agree that development discourses have functioned hegemonically, they disagree about whether a single development discourse has guided virtually all development thought and practice for the past fifty years.

A question guiding this dissertation is, what is the relationship between entrenched, hegemonic discourses—discourses that are institutionalized and implemented by development “experts”—and the discourses and practices of those who stand “outside” the “development machine”? That is, if we accept that dominant development discourses and practices have been fueled by “belief” in growth and development among the experts, do those who are “unschooled” in conventional development repeat or challenge conventional understandings? Do their discourses mask relations of power and domination, while simultaneously depoliticizing poverty, as do hegemonic constructions? If “professionalization” of knowledge is the means by which power is exercised and replicated, how do we understand what I call development’s “deprofessionalization,” or its increasing openness to lay practitioners seemingly able to side-step development’s structures and maybe even its guiding emphasis on growth? These are questions I take up in Chapter Six. To lay the foundation for the discussion of these questions, Chapter Four introduces twinning at St. Robert, while Chapter Five considers how those active on St. Robert’s Haiti committee conceptualize development and attempt to put it into practice in Haiti.

CHAPTER FOUR: TWINNING AT ST. ROBERT

Chapter Four provides an in-depth look at St. Robert, as well as individual twinning participants. Beginning with an overview of recent trends in U.S. Catholicism in order to contextualize twinning religiously, Chapter Four then moves to answer the following questions: Who are the people who engage in twinning? How do they participate? What motivates them? What do they get out of it? In what ways do they think about Haiti and twinning?

Catholicism in the U.S.

Catholics in the U.S. have a long history of charitable service, dating back to the early 19th century. For much of this history, the American Church focused its attention on mitigating the effects of poverty on the urban poor in the U.S. (Oates 1992). But, the linking of churches in the global north with those in the south is more recent and parallels the timeline of development more broadly—only occurring over the past fifty years. Slightly more than a decade after President Truman’s Four Point address calling for international development, Pope John XXIII issued a call in 1961 for increasing missionary work in the global south. As reported in McGlone 1997, within two years, the number of U.S. missionaries—mainly sisters and priests—to Latin America doubled. By 1968, the number had tripled. This missionary zeal for Latin America swept through the U.S. Church during a time of radical change for the Church more broadly.

From 1962-1965, the Second Vatican Council convened an international council of bishops to “open the windows” of the Church in order to let “a little fresh air in,” as

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Pope John XXIII said (in Walch 1989:90). While ostensibly about “updating” the church and making it more relevant to “the times,” the changes stemming from Vatican II revolutionized the church in many ways. The bishops revised and changed Church policy and law in a variety of areas: mass was to be said in local languages, with priests facing parishioners rather than the altar; the laity was to participate in singing, praying aloud, extending the sign of peace to one another via handshakes, reading to the congregation, distributing communion. Lay Catholics were to play a larger role in the lives of their churches. And, an important religious decree recognizing the religious rights of non-Catholics was passed (Walch 1989; Dolan 1992).

The changes associated with Vatican II were contentious, and a steady stream of priests and sisters began to leave their vocations—some estimate that ten thousand priests left in the twelve years following Vatican II (Walch 1989; Dolan 1992). During this same period, few men and women entered these vocations, resulting in rapid declines in the numbers of new priests and nuns (Morris 1997). Picking up the “slack,” laity has become increasingly involved in ministry (Dolan 1992).

This decline in clergy also impacted missionary activity. U.S. missionary activity levels began to wane after reaching their peak in 1968, and by 1992, the number of pastoral workers in Latin America had dropped to below 1962 levels. Yet, in spite of this decline in priest and nun missionary activity in Latin America, there has been growing support for Latin America on the part of U.S. church communities. In a survey administered by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in 1995, all respondents indicated that their support for Latin America had grown since the 1960s. Parishes and dioceses reported an 18 percent growth, Catholic institutions of higher learning an eight

percent growth, and religious communities a five percent growth (McGlone 1997). At the same time, the vast majority of these same institutions expected that their level of involvement with Latin America would stay the same or increase over the next five years. As McGlone (1997) notes, “in spite of the diminishing numbers of traditional missionaries, there is clearly more to the relationship than the sending of priests and sisters to work in Latin America.” That wider relationship consists, in part, of expanding linkages between church communities in the hemisphere.

According to McGlone (1997), there are three dimensions to these “new” church-to-church relationships: a high degree of laity involvement; short pastoral service or an “altogether new type of relationship;” renewed mission theology. Twinning, as reported herein, reflects all three of these changes. Twinning is laity-led and predicated upon the centrality of a Haiti committee in the U.S. and a priest in Haiti to facilitate sharing and exchange across the two cultures. Thus, a high degree of laity involvement and a “new type” of missionary relationship focusing on parish-to-parish relationships clearly align with McGlone’s analysis. The third feature—a renewed missionary theology—is also central to twinning.

Stemming from the National Conference of Catholic Bishops’ 1986 document, *To the Ends of the Earth*, the renewed mission theology has reconstructed the notion of mission, calling for all local churches to be in communion with one another. Moreover, as the document outlined,

The lands to which missionaries went used to be called “the missions.” These countries were seen as mission-receiving. Other countries were thought as mission-sending; they did not see themselves in need of receiving missionaries. A deeper understanding of the theology of the mission leads us to recognize that these distinctions no longer apply. Every local church is both mission-sending and mission

receiving....Together we are coming to see that any local church has no choice but to reach out to others with the gospel of Christ's love for all peoples. To say "Church" is to say "mission" (in McGlone 1997:208).

Unquestionably, twinning's emphasis on the "reverse mission" links tightly with the ideas raised by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. Reverse missions are intended to be moments of spiritual growth and renewal for those traveling to the global south, rather than trips to evangelize the locals there. Twinning suggests that those elsewhere have something to offer, to teach, Americans about spirituality and faith.

The National Conference of Catholic Bishops document also called upon local churches to enter into "dialogue" with one another.

Before all else, dialogue is a manner of acting, an attitude, and a spirit which guides one's conduct. It implies concern, respect, and hospitality towards the other. It leaves room for the other person's identity, his modes of expression, and his values. Dialogue is thus the norm and necessary manner of every form of Christian mission....Any mission not permeated by such a dialogical spirit would go against the demands of true humanity and against the teachings of the gospel (in McGlone 1997:209).

Central to the idea of the reverse mission and twinning more broadly is the notion of "mutuality," of a coming together of U.S. and parishes abroad to share their respective gifts. Twinning calls on participants to have "concern, respect, and hospitality" toward one another, to have a "non-controlling mutuality" as the promotional literature suggests (PTPA n.d.). Twinning is not simply about giving, but receiving, as well.

Moreover, twinning explicitly calls upon the "universality" of the Catholic Church, another theme raised by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. In talking about a Kansas City, Missouri parish's church-to-church relationship with a parish in El Salvador, McGlone (1997:220) remarks,

both parishes are responding to John Paul II's exhortation to be open to the Church's universality. When delegates from the United States and El Salvador visit one another's parishes they break down boundaries of provincialism so that people once considered "foreigners" become "friends." As the people of both parishes share their faith and their gifts with one another they are effectively building up their awareness and their appreciation for the universality of the faith.

These sentiments might have been taken directly from PTPA's promotional materials or from many of the narratives that I collected. Indeed, twinning intends to answer the calls of the Church to engage in missionary activity and to do so in "new ways" that affirm the uniqueness of each parish involved, but which at the same time proclaim and strengthen the universality of the Church.

And yet, as I discuss in later chapters, this is no easy feat; these relationships can be—and often are—fraught with tensions. The rhetoric and the practice of twinning are sometimes at odds, as the difficulties and constraints of cross-cultural church-to-church partnering emerge. U.S. and southern twins enter into their relationship with one another from very different positions—deriving, in part, from their very different access to and control of resources. What can emerge then—as in the case of St. Robert—is less a story of "mutuality" and common respect, and more one of accounting for twinning funds, issues of trust, and the clashing of personalities and cultures.

In 1986 the National Conference of Catholic Bishops also published *Economic Justice for All: Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy* wherein the U.S. bishops challenged American Catholics to "live our faith in the world" (NCCB 1997). Outlining a series of moral principles and economic policy issues, *Economic Justice for All* is both a critique of current economic systems, as well as a call to action for Catholics.

87. As individuals and as a nation, therefore, we are called to make a fundamental “option for the poor.” The obligation to evaluate social and economic activity from the viewpoint of the poor and the powerless arises from the radical command to love one’s neighbor as one’s self....88. The prime purpose of this special commitment to the poor is to enable them to become active participants in the life of a society. It is to enable all persons to share in and contribute to the common good (NCCB 1997:47).

The document directly addresses the role of the U.S. in the global economy and as a “donor” nation by critiquing the “politicized” nature of U.S. development assistance. Rather than addressing human need, U.S. development assistance has often taken “national security interest” as its primary purpose. Moreover, U.S. official development assistance is too paltry, with the U.S. almost last among OECD countries in terms of percentage of GNP devoted to ODA. The document implores, “The U.S. approach to the developing countries needs urgently to be changed; a country as large, rich, and powerful as ours has a moral obligation to lead in helping reduce poverty in the Third World” (NCCB 1997:94).

The document also declares that all people have a “right” to participate in the economic lives of their societies. To ensure this opportunity for all, the document asserts:

16. All members of a society have a special obligation to the poor and vulnerable.

17. Human rights are the minimum conditions for life in community. In Catholic teaching, human rights include not only civil and political rights, but also economic rights. As Pope John XXIII declared, all people have a right to life, food, clothing, shelter, rest, medical care, education, and employment.

18. Society as a whole, acting through public and private institutions, has the moral responsibility to enhance human dignity and protect human rights (NCCB 1997:224-225).

The Catholic Church as an institution—and particularly the National Conference of Catholic Bishops—has provided, then, important guidelines for Catholic economic social action in the United States. As will be seen in later discussions, many of the themes raised by the church are present in the discourses of twinning. However, aside from Theresa Patterson, no lay participants explicitly referenced—or cited knowledge of—the statements or documents presented above.

Setting the Stage: St. Robert

St. Robert is a “huge” parish, both in physical size and population. Located alongside a busy two-lane suburban street, surrounded by expansive green lawns, and nestled among expensive housing developments, St. Robert is an “upscale” parish, with around 8500 parishioners. St. Robert is actually comprised of two churches: a new, sleek modern building covered in brick and mirrored glass on the outside, with a light-colored, “open” sanctuary; and an older, darker, much smaller sanctuary enveloped by the new construction. Mass is held in the new sanctuary, with its elaborately beamed ceilings and expansive design.

St. Robert’s new sanctuary is shaped like a slice of pie. Surrounding the sanctuary—imagine the pie’s crust—is a large, curved gathering space, with windows onto the sanctuary running its entire length. Along the outside wall of the gathering space are chairs, so that parishioners can watch and hear—through speakers piping in the priests’ and lectors’ words—the entire mass without having to enter the sanctuary. These chairs, especially on Sunday morning services, fill quickly with families of young children. A hot-tub sized stone (granite?) baptismal font, with a cascading waterfall-like feature, rests in the middle of the gathering space. For those sitting in the gathering

space, mass is less formal than in the sanctuary. Kids run back and forth, play on the floor, watch through the glass, and occasionally splash in the font.

St. Robert has a kind of frenetic energy around mass times. The parking lot, lined with SUVs, mini-vans, and luxury cars, hosts a kind of wild race to find parking. Many rush through the church doors, which line the outer edge of the gathering space in three main entry areas, and hurry into the sanctuary just as the priest is preparing the processional. And, a surprising number of people arrive after mass has started, late by five, ten, or even twenty minutes. There is also a push to leave church quickly, with long lines of cars waiting to get out of the parking lot and a sometimes not very friendly jockeying for a position in the exit line. The atmosphere at St. Robert's Sunday masses is often charged. There is lots of energy, with kids running around, parents chasing them, parishioners arriving late, and trying to leave quickly. There is a real sense that these are busy people, leading active lives, and trying to make the most of every precious minute.

Similarly, St. Robert is a very busy, very active parish. There are literally dozens of ways parishioners can become involved in the life of the church, with most initiatives laity-led. Each fall, St. Robert hosts a "Know Your Parish Weekend," where parishioners are encouraged to "pick a ministry" for the coming year as a "gift to our community" (St. Robert 2003). There are opportunities to participate in "typical" Catholic service roles (e.g., as lectors, eucharistic ministers), enroll in educational classes, join retreats, and the like. There are also recreational opportunities: bridge, golf and softball leagues, a mother's group, the gardening club. Haiti falls under the church's "Service and Outreach" activities, which are broken into categories of

“Christian service” and “pastoral service.” Haiti outreach is considered “Christian service” and described in the parish directory in the following way:

Representatives from the parish go nearly every year to Our Lady’s Nativity parish in Verrettes, Haiti. As ambassadors of goodwill, they take our greetings and our love and return with news of how the projects we sponsor are progressing and where our focus should be in the coming year (St. Robert 2003).

Haiti Outreach is only one of an astounding fifteen Christian service activities open to parishioners.²¹ Of these, it is noteworthy that nine include some focus on food provisioning (e.g., Thanksgiving turkeys, soup kitchens, pizza parties for nursing home residents, birthday parties for youth in detention), as does the Haiti twinning.²² In brief, both the individuals at St. Robert as well as St. Robert as an institution are engaged, lively, and active.

Christian Service: Haiti Outreach

The almost palpable vigor characterizing mass is less evident at the Haiti committee meetings, probably in part because the meetings take place in the evenings and there are usually no young children present. Moreover, most people active on the committee are themselves older, established in—or even retired from—their careers and have teenaged or older children. Committee meetings are scheduled by Cassie and now Dennis, who jointly lead the committee. As mentioned earlier, the Haiti program at St.

21 Wuthnow (2004:62) suggests that “the presence of special-purpose groups accounts for the fact that many congregations adopt a portfolio of causes and ministries, rather than devoting their energies fully to one cause or ministry. Contributing in small ways to many programs means being able to respond positively to particular interest groups.”

22 Perhaps this is for the same reasons noted by Poppendieck (1999:39-40): “Hunger is probably the most common evocation of poverty and injustice found in either testament....The filled stomach and the shared table dwell close to the heart and hearth of religious imagery, liturgy, and practice....In fact, virtually all of the world’s major religions make reference in their scriptures to the obligation to alleviate suffering in general, and to “feed the hungry” in particular” (39-40). Wuthnow (2004:62) suggests food programs are so popular among congregations because they are “familiar” projects, with long histories and well-publicized levels of need.

Robert was initiated by Cassie, who invested considerable time and energy into establishing and then maintaining the twinning. As such, the twinning is closely linked in many people's minds as "Cassie's project." But, in the past year, Cassie has moved an hour's drive away from Ada. Her role in the St. Robert twinning is diminishing, as she increasingly shares responsibilities with Dennis, who now officially co-heads the committee.

Committee meetings are scheduled on an "as needed" basis, usually about every three months or so. News of a meeting is sent through the Haiti committee e-mail list and published in the parish bulletin, informing members of the date, time, and location. Meetings are generally held on a weeknight around 7:00, average an hour and a half to two hours in length, and they typically occur in the "lounge," in the back of the church building across from the administrative offices and classrooms. While there is a coffee pot and other amenities in the lounge, generally no food or drink is provided.

One wall of the lounge overlooks the entryway, allowing those already in the meeting to see who is coming in. The couch and lounge chairs are rarely, if ever, used by meeting participants. Instead, a large conference table near the entry serves as the meeting point, with participants entering the room, greeting one another, sometimes giving hugs, then taking a seat at the table. Cassie sets the meeting agenda, often sending it via email, and sometimes handing out copies at the meeting. Sometimes other information is also distributed. For example, newspaper articles, correspondence, or photographs might be shared.

In contrast to mass, people generally arrive on time for the committee meetings. A "core" of committee members has been present at most, if not all, of the meetings I

have attended since 2001: Sister Joan, Cassie, Dennis, Sally (who recently moved away), Mary Ann, Rod (Cassie's husband). Others have attended many or the majority of meetings: Father Lou, Sharon, Chris, Mike, Bob (now terminally ill). Still others sometimes attend meetings but not with the regularity of those just mentioned: Val and Ashley, Bill and Char (in Haiti now for six months each year), Tom. Finally, an electronic list-serve keeps other committee members "in the loop" regarding the goings on of the twinning. In all, then, about sixteen people rotate in and out of the committee meetings; Cassie identified another fifteen who she considered important members of the committee, although I rarely—if ever—saw them at meetings.²³ For the most part, those on the committee are educated, working professionals (lawyers, small-business owners, medical specialists), who are volunteering their time and talents to the twinning program.

While open to the parish, meetings rarely host many "new" people. Of the three meetings I attended between 2001-2004 where I noted a newcomer present, none has become a regular committee member. Indeed, each attended only a single meeting. While in principle the committee encourages new people to become involved, the structure of the committee, its established programming, and its population (all people who have been to Haiti, except for Sister Joan, who cannot travel for health reasons) now effectively exclude newcomers from participating. Said one person:

We have a constant circling of getting new members on the committee. They often want to do things or make suggestions that they don't follow

²³ In all, Cassie identified thirty-one committee members as important to interview for this project. Of these, I interviewed twenty-one. Three people explicitly declined to be interviewed, saying they did not consider themselves active and "didn't really have anything to offer" about the program. Two had moved from the parish. One I was unable to locate. One was dying of cancer, and I did not feel comfortable burdening him with an interview. The remaining participants implicitly declined to be interviewed by not responding to my requests.

up on. Or, they'll tell about someone else who does something....The problem is we could spend all our time networking. And, we do. But, we have a vision that we want to do. We don't want to reinvent the wheel every time (Interview #1).

There is a sense, at least by some, that taking new parishioners onto the committee is inefficient, that by having to bring people up to speed not only on the projects but on what Haiti is “like,” the work of the committee is slowed down. Indeed, the person quoted above calls those on the Haiti committee “specialists” because they have traveled to Haiti and understand the parameters of the programming. These twenty-five or so “specialists” are consulted on Haiti matters—either via the list-serve or at the committee meetings—and are kept abreast of happenings, primarily by Cassie. At the same time that some hesitate bringing new members onto the committee, however, there is an awareness that the twinning relationship—and specifically certain needs at Our Lady—must be kept “in front” of the wider parish in order to maintain enthusiasm and support for the twinning. And so, part of the work of the Haiti committee is to spread news of goings-on in Haiti, and to report back to the parish on programming progress. Importantly, St. Robert's parishioners usually get twinning information only after it has been filtered through the Haiti committee—primarily through Cassie or Sr. Joan.

While communicating to the wider parish about Haiti and twinning is one part of the committee's work, their larger focus has been to establish the mission of the twinning, get projects in place to meet that mission, and then help keep them going by monitoring progress, fundraising, and tracking finances. When I came onboard in 2001, the focus of the twinning (the “vision” mentioned above) was well-established. All of the current projects mentioned in Chapter One—educational sponsorship, vocational school, micro-loans, and the like—were already underway, meaning I did not see first-

hand how they were decided upon or put into action. Rather, I saw the committee's work to keep them going, the "successes" and "failures" they experienced, as well as the numerous challenges they faced. Many of these challenges—including problems of communication, accountability, and the like—will be detailed in later chapters, as they resonate strongly with issues encountered more broadly in conventional development practice. Here, I want to concentrate instead on the "day-to-day" activities of the committee and its functioning, as well as the stories of its members.

Inside the Haiti Committee

As mentioned, relatively few committee members regularly attend committee meetings. A typical meeting has anywhere from eight to twelve people present, with Cassie leading discussion according to the agenda she has set. After initial greetings and "catching up," meetings begin with a prayer, followed by discussion of the major items of importance, as outlined in the agenda. Because meetings are not regularly scheduled, when they do occur, they generally have a specific set of issues or "problems" that need addressing. That is, because meetings are relatively infrequent, when they do happen, it is usually because something requires discussion.

Most members of St. Robert's Haiti committee have traveled to Haiti at least once since the twinning began in 1995. And, a few have been numerous times. The face-to-face communications with the priests and parishioners of Our Lady reinforce the commitment the parishes have made to each other by reminding participants at both ends that "real" people are involved. The visits highlight, particularly for St. Robert's parishioners, the humanity that they share, and the way that poverty is working against that humanity in Haiti. According to one woman, "Traveling makes you want to do

more [to help]" (Interview #4). Another commented, "You don't know unless you go. It's imperative. How can you help someone in that situation without seeing firsthand what they need?" (Interview #3).

The motivation for helping and insight into Our Lady's needs come from traveling, from bearing witness to life in Haiti. By meeting project participants, visiting with elementary students and their teachers, and simply walking through the town, St. Robert's parishioners gain a sense of what life is like in Haiti. That said, the Haitian priests—with their limited English—remain the primary contacts for the Americans, and they ultimately have significant control over the visitors' experiences. When St. Robert's parishioners are "interviewing" local Creole speakers about their needs, the priests or their associates often provide the translation. The priests help interpret and explain to the Americans what they are seeing and why, and what might be done to remedy certain injustices. Thus, while traveling is generally considered an essential component to the twinning, it must be understood as a "buffered" experience.

In one instance, a committee meeting was called shortly after a delegation had returned from Haiti. This meeting was organized around members' reports from the field, though as the following account demonstrates, conversation can flow in many directions from the initial jumping off point. Talking about the vocational school:

Committee member #1: The women have had one graduating class, and two groups of men have graduated. I don't know about jobs. When you ask about specific numbers, things get fuzzy. [Why are there no jobs for students?] Because no jobs are available....

Committee member #2: Instead of having such specific programs, maybe some of the programs should shift, like to electricity.

Committee member #3: What about incorporating general health training into the school? They think only women transmit AIDS.

Committee member #4: What about literacy training at the trade school? Do the women know how to read and write? They should teach everyone to read and write. They don't know about micro-organisms, they don't know that putting a baby on the floor where the pig just ran through is a problem. They don't know that a baby gets sick from malaria. When they watched a video about malaria, they didn't think it applied to them because the mosquito on the TV was so big. They said, "we don't have to worry about it because our mosquitoes aren't that big" [laughter]. There needs to be more medical outreach. Why can't we use the services already in place, like at Albert Schweitzer hospital? We could use the cinema to show health videos, then give certificates. They go nuts for certificates.

Committee member #5: How do we empower the people more? What opportunities are there?

Committee member #6: We have to be very patient. Val saw improvement from four years ago. We'll never get them to our level—ever—in our lifetime. But, there's the school, the new road. We're dealing with a historical and cultural reality that takes a long time to change and empower.

The exchange demonstrates several key characteristics of Haiti committee meetings.

First, participants are active in these meetings, throwing their ideas out to the group without much hesitation. But, ideas are not always picked up upon or commented on by others at the table. Second, the focus of the discussion can become rather diffuse, even though these are "specialists" brainstorming. Usually Cassie (though sometimes others, as in the case above), tries to refocus discussion, to rein it back toward answering the central concerns raised on the agenda. Third, despite vocal exchanges in meetings, some see the refocusing of the discussion, and the lack of acknowledgement for certain ideas, as an indication that the committee is too centralized or non-participatory. When asked about how differences of opinion are handled on the committee, one woman

involved in the above exchange said, “Well, Cassie gets her way, and the rest of us are ignored.” Responding to the same question, another mentioned,

At times, I’ve been frustrated. When tensions get high, meetings become less frequent. But, I’ve never seen any hostility at the meetings. Also, there’s a small core group that tends to make the decisions. Meetings are an opportunity to talk about different things, to share goals. We’re not using an up or down, yay or nay vote, but we have an agenda. We tend to go from point A to B, and the committee is along for the ride. But, in fairness to the committee, our long-term commitment is to a relatively few number of projects. So, if I got the bright idea to do X,Y Z, we don’t have the money, because we’ve already committed to different programs. We tend to do the same things over and over, so there’s not a lot of room for innovation...I’ve never seen any big disagreements or fundamental differences in what we should be doing or how we should be doing it. To the extent [disagreements] occur, people just stop participation in the committee. But, I think some may have frustration that power is too centralized (Interview #6).

The idea that power is too centralized is linked to the essential role Cassie plays in both organizing and running the meetings, as well as her historical position as the point person for most St. Robert - Our Lady interaction. Cassie has also been particularly active in seeking out members of the parish who have special skills that might be useful in furthering the twinning. Cassie is the founder, organizer, facilitator, and leader of St. Robert’s twinning program. Said another, “There needs to be more diversity on the committee. Cassie is overworked. There are not enough other people actively involved” (Interview #2). Whether this is intentional (again, by limiting participation to “specialists” and maintaining a firm control of the twinning’s operation) or simply the byproduct of trying to successfully establish and administer such a massive project in the midst of an already socially active parish, Cassie undeniably has been at the core of facilitating St. Robert’s twinning, and in all likelihood, without her firm hand guiding the project, it would not have gotten off the ground.

The central role that Cassie has played is not uniformly criticized, however. Many have commented to me that Cassie is *the* reason for the twinning at St. Robert. “The Haiti program encompasses a lot [of] energy and people. Cassie has been the stronghold and leader....Without her, the program would not have survived” (Interview #8). Said another,

Cassie has always been at the heart of it....The rest of us floated in and out....Cassie has always been the one who takes care of wiring money, sending money for airline tickets. One person has to take the overall view, and she is certainly not just committed and dedicated, but she’s a very talented person (Interview #10).

But, now that Cassie has moved from the area and is increasingly ceding control of the committee to Dennis, some worry her absence will end in the collapse of the program. At this point, however, despite some speculation that “it’s really Cassie’s project,” the twinning appears to be stable and withstanding her reduced involvement.

To return to the committee meeting introduced above, following discussion of the trade school, a new thread was picked up regarding perceived trouble with the administration of the microcredit project:

Committee member #7: We need to protect the donor’s intention, which is to make the money available without a lot of red tape.

Committee member #1: We just need to reform the [microloan] committee [in Haiti.] It should be Father (Yvens), the sewing teacher, the two sisters. Gerard [current head of microloan committee] uses that committee for his own power.

Committee member #2: What are people using the microcredit for?

Committee member #1: Roadside stands, re-selling. The idea is to wean them off the program so that they can save.

Committee member #7: They need a class for microloans.

Committee member #4: They don't understand the need to save thirty cents from every dollar.

Committee member #6: It's just as much about the process as the end result.

Committee member #1: It's just a stepping stone [like the trade school]. With education as a mechanic, you can go in a bunch of different directions. The dilemma is, if we're teaching too many other things, we're going to run out of space and money. The school is giving them more than an education....

Committee member #4: How do we give them a sense of ownership? A sense of pride?

Committee member #3: By requiring students to give back. After they graduate, they have to give back to others. That would mean we'd need someone there to monitor, and we don't have that purpose....

Committee member #8: What is our mission? Is it paving the plaza? Fixing the bell tower? The pews? What is the focus of the twinning program?

Committee member #1: We focus on education, but it's hard to learn when the environment is so poor. We need to have some focus on the physical environment.

Committee member #7: We need to improve the worship space, but the bell tower, that's aesthetic. Pews are part of the worship space. But, they can have a fruitful life without having the plaza across from the church paved.

Committee member #1: But, they say that the dust from the plaza blows into the church....

Again, in the midst of discussion about how to make the microcredit project run more efficiently—the microloan committee in Haiti had set interest rates higher than St. Robert felt was appropriate—a number of issues were raised, most importantly among them, what is the purpose of twinning? I posed this same question to each of the people I interviewed, and not surprisingly, I discovered the purpose of twinning was not readily agreed upon.

TABLE 4.1 TWINNING'S GOALS

Purpose / Goals of St. Robert Twinning	Number of Responses
"Help" Haitians	7
Development / Promote self-sufficiency	6
Education	5
Spiritual growth	5
Promote a better life for Haitians	5
Provide food aid	4
Financial support	4
Not sure	3
Know one another / bring two cultures together	2
Maintain church in Haiti	1
Bring peace and dignity to Haitians	1

***Note:** The total number of responses is greater than twenty-one, since most respondents gave more than one answer.

Twining promotional literature from the Grand Rapids Diocese states that twinning is intended to "be a physical demonstration of God's love to the people of Haiti" to encourage "personal, prayerful solidarity with Haitian brothers and sisters. The local [Michigan] parish will find many opportunities to provide resources and support to their Haitian twin in religious, educational, medical, and economic areas, while maintaining a non-controlling mutuality in the relationship" (Haiti Outreach Project of the Diocese of Grand Rapids, Michigan, n.d.). And indeed, as the table above suggests, the St. Robert's twinning project does find its overall purpose in

forging religious, educational, and economic links to Our Lady, though not all agreed each was central to twinning's purpose.

For example, one person emphasized education and literacy as twinning goals, a theme strongly echoed in several other narratives. But, this same person downplayed the spiritual components of the relationship.

From my perspective, [the goal of the twinning] is to promote literacy and education, specifically, to give them a chance for a better life. In conjunction with that, there's the school lunch program, which, to a degree, is an adjunct to learning. It's not so much to feed the hungry as to help them have a productive education program....Education is the main program, subsidizing scholarships for families who may not be able to afford school. There's the trade school, where they're trying to teach life skills. At those levels, we're still trying to reinforce reading and literacy to increase job opportunities and improve the day-to-day lives of students. It may have originally been a goal, but I don't see a lot of sharing on a theological basis, from church to church (Interview #6).

This is not to suggest twinning does not have a spiritual component. Indeed, five interviewees mentioned spiritual growth as an explicit goal of twinning. And, as seen in discussion below, many consider Haitians to be more spiritually aware than Americans. But, in the day-to-day running of the twinning program at St. Robert, most exchanges between Our Lady and St. Robert focus on the economic dimensions of their relationship: How much money is needed, how much has been wired, how the programs are progressing, how they might be improved, and the like.

In talking about what makes a "good" twinning relationship, Doug, coordinator of the Grand Rapids Haiti Outreach Project, emphasized bringing "two Catholic communities...together, partners who have abilities that will help out with what the other partner lacks. So, it's also a receiving for churches in

America. It should be a give and take, with both giving.” But, this idea of give and take was absent from most interviewee’s assessments of St. Robert’s purpose in twinning. And, when it was mentioned, it was generally to counter the notion that a parish-level give and take was occurring. Again, responding to the question of St. Robert’s goals in twinning, one man explained:

To reach out to a parish that is culturally different than our own and to provide our support, our spiritual support, and our physical support in helping that parish in ways that they need help. Part of this, the point of the program, is that their mission is similar. Their culture and resources help our parish. It’s not charity because both parishes benefit. But, in reality, we receive very little physical benefit from the parish in Verrettes....Originally, we were hoping for more give and take. At this end, we’ve found it difficult to get people up from Haiti. So, it’s tended to be more of one-way street (Interview #12).

This raises the question, is twinning charity? As the quote above suggests, some on the Haiti committee tend not to see twinning as a form of charity, precisely because it is supposed to be “mutually beneficial” and rewarding for both parties. Yet, the lopsidedness of twinning’s practice, whereby the flows of money and people are overwhelmingly unilateral, calls such idealism into question.

Poppendieck’s (1998:231-232) discussion of “charity” in U.S. food banks rings eerily familiar in the context of twinning:

Charity is one of those remarkable words that helps to identify the fault lines of a culture. For some people, its connotations are wholly positive. It signifies unselfishness, tolerance, altruism, even love....For many other people, however, the word has a thoroughly negative connotation. It is the gift, offered with condescension and accepted in desperation, that is necessitated by incapacity and failure. It is the last resort, the end of the road. It carries a stigma, a badge of shame, that is almost too much to bear.

As will become clear in later discussions, the “fault lines” in St. Robert’s twinning reflect the tensions undergirding the “beneficiary” and “benefactor” character of these

relationships identified by Poppendieck. In reality, rather than talking about mutuality or exchange, most people spoke about the purpose of the program in terms of what St. Robert can and does do for Our Lady in Verrettes.

To give a helping hand, basically. To help the parish of Verrettes, to help the people there in the parish have a chance for a better life, hopefully to have a chance to know God better by keeping their ministry going (Interview #13).

Self-sufficiency. To help them be able to tap independently into the resources they have so they don't have to depend on outside resources, like they have to now. That's a dream for all countries. Nothing is impossible with God. The goal of twinning is to help foster that (Interview #3).

As a community, Our Lady generally is thought to benefit "more" than St. Robert. At the same time, committee members clearly classify their individual involvement as enriching and rewarding. They can and do articulate the "personal rewards" they get out of twinning and speculate about how others might be benefiting, as well.

I think [the goals are], number one, to help a Third World country....I think it's allowing the Americans to get involved, on a much smaller basis. You don't have to be in government to see this, to help a little bit. I gotta think at times it's more beneficial to Americans than it is to Haitians. Maybe we're stopping fifty people from a small town from starving. But, I can't help but believe people's lives here are being touched by it (Interview #15).

[I see our goals as] helping our fellow brothers, our fellow human beings. One parish helping another parish, a parish in the States helping a parish there. And, I think it's a good way to do it because it's not, it's not just any organization, you know, that you're helping. You get to know people, not like the United Way. How much money have we given to the United Way, and did it change your life? The people at St. Roberts are so caring and concerned. I probably shouldn't say they all are, but those I've met (Interview #16).

St. Robert's is a very affluent area. And, I think that twinning brings home specific examples to let us know how well off we are and how much we need to share what we have (Interview #21).

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As hinted at in the Haiti committee exchange introduced above, some people were hesitant about whether, in fact, they really knew the goals of the twinning—(e.g., “Well, isn’t it, as I understand it, just to help with poorer nations, with educating and feeding young people?” or “[Laughs] Don’t quote me but self-sufficiency, given the different focus each project has? There’s the mechanics school, the sewing school...just to name a couple. Certainly the goals of these things are to teach the people how to live for themselves.” And, three people said outright that they did not know what the purpose of twinning was. As one woman admitted,

[The goals are] cloudy to me. I’m not sure. We want to assist in the education of the children and provide food for the children. We’re also helping with church. But, the goals are not clear to me, short of, we have money and want to help you. Here’s the money.

Echoing these sentiments, another woman, who is no longer active in twinning, said,

I don’t know what the goals are, and that’s part of my frustration. I challenged them—what are the goals? What are we trying to accomplish? No one was able to answer me. That contributed to my lack of participation (Interview #9).

And finally, “I’m really not sure. Ask Cassie. Maybe to make an improvement in their lives?” Surprisingly, two of the three respondents unable to identify the goals or purpose of the twinning are among the most active participants, regularly attending Haiti committee meetings. Why they should be unclear about the twinning’s goals is not immediately evident, but I suspect it has to do, in part, with their active participation in the committee meetings. As seen in the excerpts above, the meetings tend to focus on managing projects already underway, often taking a micro-oriented approach. And, despite the agenda, exchanges at the meetings can steer off-course, become muddled, fall prey to competing ideas about what the goals of twinning are (again, also reflected

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in the diverse answers given in Table 4.1 above.) Perhaps their “deep” involvement in twinning—and for one, the “run-ins” she sometimes has with Cassie—has allowed these participants a more nuanced assessment of twinning stemming, in part, from a more immersed understanding of the frustrations and challenges of running the program.

As the above meeting descriptions and narratives suggest, the Haiti committee is a relatively loosely-knit collective, bound together by an interest in Haiti but coming to the table from a variety of positions and different understandings of twinning’s purpose and goals. Because these are people who have worked together on Haiti-issues for a number of years, meetings are vocal gatherings where people feel comfortable inserting their opinions. Likewise, however, people feel equally comfortable ignoring suggestions and conversations that do not fit with the overall “goals” of the meeting. Cassie, until recently the only chair of the Haiti committee since St. Robert’s joined the twinning program, has wielded enormous influence over the program, deciding the direction of the twinning, recruiting new committee members, spearheading fundraising, calling and facilitating meetings, maintaining correspondence, and many other activities. Her leadership has been a source of inspiration for some, and a cause of concern for others. Yet, without question, she has been central to St. Robert’s dedication to twinning.

Introducing the Committee Members

A “core” group makes up the heart of St. Robert’s Haiti committee. These are folks who regularly attend the committee meetings, stay abreast of goings-on via the St. Robert email list, and offer their opinions on the direction of the twinning. Many also

staff the booth at St. Robert's yearly "Get to Know Your Parish" weekend events, attend the occasional events organized by Doug and the Haiti Outreach Project, collect and organize items for shipment to Haiti, and otherwise act as the faces of St. Robert's twinning program. So, who are they? What motivates them? What do they get out of twinning? This next section explores these questions by looking at some especially active members of the Haiti committee.

Who Participates?

As mentioned earlier, most (though not all) of those on St. Robert's Haiti committee are professionals (working and retired), most being college graduates, and several having completed post-graduate training (e.g., law, medicine, business). While some are younger and some older, participants tend to be in their forties and fifties and financially secure. Most are married but participate individually, though three couples have been among the more active members during my time observing the committee 2001-2004. Eight people mentioned having some schooling in French (most a year or two of high school French), with one person having a bachelor's degree in French. Only a few have studied Haitian Creole, the primary language of most Haitians²⁴, and the Creole classes provide only a very basic introduction to the language (e.g., greetings, prayers, songs). As such, many folks identified language barriers as a real issue, as only Cassie and Dennis are able to read, write, and speak French adequately

²⁴ Haitian Creole classes have been periodically organized by Doug on behalf of the Haiti Outreach Project. Classes run six to eight weeks, are open to anyone who would like to participate and are taught by local Haitians who Doug recruits.

enough to communicate with the priests in Haiti²⁵, while no one is proficient in Creole.

Similarly, the priests in Haiti have limited proficiency in English.

It's difficult because we can't communicate with the Haitians. No one speaks French and Creole well enough to "sit in the mud" and talk about life. Communication is a barrier. I can use my hands to get what I want...but that doesn't help me know where they're coming from, what they need. That's hard. (Interview #4).

For the most part, those on the Haiti committee are lifelong Catholics; one also identifies as a "born again" Christian, while another is quite disenchanted with the church. But, nineteen are "cradle" Catholics who, by and large, are comfortable with their faith and the direction of the Catholic church, though many explicitly stated their dismay about the pedophilia scandal involving priests, which has rocked the Church especially hard since the late 1990s and early 2000s. Generally seeing the changes accompanying Vatican II as positive (e.g., from Latin-spoken masses to local languages, increasing importance of laity), Haiti committee members might be considered "liberal" according to some definitions. Yet, few subscribe to publications like the National Catholic Reporter, and they do not necessarily describe themselves as "social justice" advocates. A few were explicit that their participation on the Haiti committee responded to a Catholic call to be sensitive to the needs of the poor, what some call a "preferential option for the poor"—sentiments similar to those in the NCCB documents introduced earlier. But, no committee members explicitly linked participation in twinning with support for liberation ideology, perhaps owing to a broader association of liberation ideology with "communism" or perhaps simply

²⁵ Cassie and Dennis are the only two French speakers among the most active committee members. As a parish, St. Robert has a number of French speakers, who are called upon to act as interpreters when priests visit from Haiti.

because they are not familiar with its tenets. When asked about his Catholic faith, one man said:

Well, I guess I'm a believer in the doctrine. I have many friends, some of who are Christian Reformed, some who are bible-based, some non-denominational. We all see the world in slightly different ways. I believe, you know, "faith without works is dead." We need to do as it says in Matthew: feed the hungry, clothe the naked, reach out to our fellow neighbor. We are to be Good Samaritans. It's only natural to me [to be involved in twinning] —as a product of the Catholic Church, which is, you know, the original church through Jesus Christ, Peter, and Paul (Interview #12).

This man was one of six out of twenty-one interviewees who mentioned Jesus Christ during the course of the interviews; for the five, however, there was little linking of ideas about Jesus to the practice of twinning. For example, one woman talked about the "Jesus loves me, this I know" approach to Catholicism as the "dumbing down" of the church. Another mentioned the way the name "Jesus Christ" bombards her in Haiti: on buses and signs. And a third mentioned Jesus Christ as his "hero," and then went on to comment on his reason for participating in twinning in this way:

I guess the satisfaction that our monies are going to be lumped with other monies to do good, to help those who don't have. I can't do enough to take care of one person or patient. But, together, the church can do a lot....I think it's fulfilling the reason to be a church community. To give back, to help others (Interview #11).

Yet, an explicit emphasis on religious motivation for participating in twinning was actually missing from most members' discussions about how and why they personally became involved in twinning, and what they "get out of it" now. Instead, most interviewees talked about their role in twinning in broader terms, tying their participation to ideas about "helping" or bettering others' lives. And, while such notions likely stem from or relate to teachings of the church—like "faith without works is dead"—interviewees tended not to make those links explicit. One man, for example, emphasized the personal relationships he forges through twinning:

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Well, regardless of the country we're twinning with, the fact that it does put you into a personal, face-to-face relationship with people with dire needs around the world is very meaningful. And, when you put in a lot of volunteer time, it is amazing how much you can actually affect their standard of living, their hopes for the future (Interviewee #20)

A woman framed her participation in terms of helping those who, despite limitations of age and economic standing, were appreciative of her efforts.

What better thing can you do than to have an opportunity to help someone who needs so much help? I can't see any other reason for living....Every time we visited a classroom, children would say, "Don't stop feeding us" [referring to the school lunch program.] One child gave a speech, "Thank you for coming to visit us. You've left your home and family to come and visit us." For a child to say that, it's just incomprehensible [sic]. They were so excited because we were there visiting them (#16).

Enthusiasm and gratitude were, for this woman and many others, important motivators spurring on continued fundraising and twinning involvement. At the same time, that the thanks came from children is noteworthy, as well. In the United States, there is belief that children are innocent and should be shielded from hardship and violence (Jenkins 1998). The St. Robert's twinning program likewise invests in this idea by prioritizing the needs of children. Not only are the largest expenditures directed toward Our Lady's children (e.g., food project, child sponsorship), children figure prominently in fundraising materials, stories published in the church bulletin, and in the promotional video St. Robert produced. Moreover, when the needs of adults and children are seen to conflict, children's needs are prioritized. For example, when funds ran short (as is discussed in the following chapter) in the school lunch project, children in Haiti were fed less often than St. Robert's Haiti committee intended. Moreover, when meals were served, some teachers and parents were eating along with the children. Because their goal was to feed children, "not people off the streets," St.

Robert quickly acted to limit adults' access to the project by instructing Our Lady's priest to feed children first. So, it is not surprisingly, then, that when talking about motivations for twinning participation, or of meaningful experiences in Haiti, many people mention children. For example, emphasizing both her obligation to share, as well as the importance of educating children, one woman commented:

I believe we ought to share. St. Roberts shares, at the grassroots level. Many organizations are sent money for charity, and ten cents of every dollar gets to where you want it to. In Haiti, that money is effectively used, and it changes people's lives. When we feed 1400 kids a day, that encourages their parents—who don't necessarily value education—to send their kids to school. Maybe they're sending them for the wrong reason (to get the meal), but the kids are getting an education. They probably wouldn't otherwise. In a country where ten percent of the population is literate, education is an enormous need (Interview #10).

While children figure prominently in many committee members' stories, as well as in the focus of the twinning, some members also talk about the meaning they find in the cultural dimensions of twinning.

I've enjoyed the cultural part of it, the Catholic part of it, the French part of it. Haiti is infinitely fascinating. And, the needs there are such that you can't walk away from it (Interview #1).

I was drawn [to Haiti because] I have such an appreciation and love of other cultures. I was very drawn to...the country (Interview #3).

As Abu-Lughod (1991; 1993) has noted, however, the idea of "culture" has been central to the ways people "other" one another. That is, by thinking about differences in terms of "culture"—packaged generalities that collapse internal differentiation (whether stemming from class, ethnicity, gender, age, ability, sexuality, and the like) while emphasizing differences *between* groups—people are able to imagine themselves as being very different from others. Certainly this is true of twinning, where the idea that

Haitians are very different from Americans is central to how twinning is imagined, as well as in how it plays out.

Thinking about Haitians

As a busy, affluent parish in suburban Michigan, St. Robert in many ways captures an ethos dominant in white, middle-class America: the importance of “success” attained through hard work and education, and evidenced through the accumulation and display of material objects. Well-educated and successful, many members of the St. Robert’s Haiti committee contrast themselves, their lives, their communities, with those of “Haitians,” whose defining characteristic for them is poverty. When committee members talk about Haitians, they are referring to the peasantry, to farmers, to marketers. The term “Haitian” is used generally to refer to Haiti’s poor and marginalized, even though Haiti has a diverse population that spans the spectrum from rich to poor. Such differences are largely ignored, and committee members tend to speak in broad terms about who Haitians are, what they are like, and what they do by collapsing differences and instead calling forth the imagined traits of Haiti’s poorest.

The premise of the St. Robert’s twinning program is that Our Lady in Verrettes is a parish with significant material needs, reflecting the poverty of its parishioners. St. Robert’s focuses on providing resources (education, access to credit, food) to meet those needs, while also trying to equip Haitians with tools to one day meet those needs on their own. The orientation of the twinning, in other words, might be understood by scholars like Escobar, Rist and others as centered around correcting “deficiencies” present in Haiti and / or Haitians. At the same time, however, there is an explicit focus on finding and appreciating the “mutual gifts” each parish has to offer the other. That

is, on the one hand, committee members are encouraged to address the “problems” plaguing their twin; on the other, they are implored to look for and appreciate their twin’s unique gifts. It is not surprising, then, that Haiti committee members often present contradictory opinions about Haiti (both as a group, but also within individual narratives), or that many people seemed almost surprised by the “positive” qualities or experiences they discovered while traveling there.

The comparisons that committee members draw between themselves and Haitians are, in some instances, romanticizations of what is imagined to be lacking in the lives of St. Robert’s parishioners: time for family, an emphasis on spirituality, non-materialism. At other times, Haitians are held up as examples of what is best avoided: welfare dependency, laziness, illiteracy. Whether framed as examples to emulate or to repudiate, Haitians are, in any case, often thought to be very different from Americans.

One word that appears throughout the narratives describing Haitians is “dignified.” In a context where poverty, hunger, and disenfranchisement are rampant, Haitians often are perceived to be overcoming or escaping what would be expected of them: hopelessness, despair, and self-pity. Rather than acting like or presenting themselves as “second class citizens,” Haitians are seen to be dignified despite (and yet, because of) their poverty. “They’re very clean, bathed, they stand-up tall, their clothes are cleaned, there’s lots of formality in the way they greet each other. That shows dignity” (Interview #1). Coming from an environment where a “good” appearance is so central to affirming a person’s worth, Haiti committee members see the care with which Haitians present themselves as somehow indicative of their value as human beings, as well as a sort of “pulling themselves up from the mud” spirit that maybe is missing

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among America's poor. Haitians are seen to be overcoming barriers when they show up for mass so "well-dressed" (Interview #6). Said one woman:

They are clean. Well, their feet are all dirty because they have no shoes and are walking around the streets. But in church, they are all clean and dressed nicely. Not expensively, but nicely. The clothes they wore were pressed. We don't even do that here! And to do that, they have to have a fire for the iron. That blew me away. We saw women bathing and doing laundry in the river. They take it down to the river, in baskets on their heads. Then, 100 yards up or down stream, there would be others nude bathing [laughs] (Interview #7).

The idea that Haitians, despite what is considered almost insurmountable adversity by Haiti committee members, continue to affirm their own self-worth via concern for appearance is inspiring and surprising to some. And, it is seen as a commendable quality Haitians possess.

Haitians are also admired for what is perceived to be a focus on family. In the U.S., building a successful career is often thought to come at the expense of building a close-knit family. Haitians are seen to be not

so stressed over work, work isn't their first priority....I wish in the U.S. people had more time for family and friends, and had that as a priority, rather than on work or "getting ahead." (Interview #2).²⁶

26 While generalizing about Haitians and work-related stress, these committee members tended not explicitly link this to lack of job opportunities. With formal sector unemployment at around 70 percent (CIA World Factbook 2005), it's true the majority of Haitians often do not have "fast track" career paths to forge. Yet, to characterize them as somehow stress-free seems problematic, as well. Many Haitians "stress" about insecurity, joblessness, the daily reality of grinding poverty in their lives (e.g., see Bell 2001). One woman, for example, lamented her situation in heart-wrenching terms:

I have been left abandoned with children in my hand. I don't have anywhere to go with them. Now look, I am sick, but I can't even buy medicine. I am sick, I cannot go to the doctor. Going to the doctor would mean that they give me a prescription. With what am I going to fill that prescription? It's better that I stay home. Some days I spend lying down, I'm sick, I can't do anything for myself. The children are suffering. There are times that I can't find food to give the children. There are times it is only salt water I can put in the children's stomachs so that they can live while waiting for me to find someone who will stretch out his hand and give me so that I can give them. From early morning, I leave them, I go out, I go out. I leave them, all day long I am thinking about how they are doing in the house (in Hefferan 1998).

This idea of family, and even of “family values” as one interviewee stated, is important to twinning participants.

I think that we in America, as Americans, from the perspective of an American, we miss a lot. Life goes by so fast, things just happen. When we go to bed, we think, “What happened?” The kids have grown up so fast. Your wife has been worrying about the 401Ks, about the stock market and so on and so on. Haiti is a Third World country, but if we can separate that “Third World poverty” concept from just the simplicity of living in a Third World culture. What I mean by that is, the family structure, the unity that’s involved, the simplicity of faith that’s involved (Interview #5).

What is seen to be the superior capability of Haitians to make time for family, to “focus on what’s important” is linked also to the lack of “clutter” in their lives, the difference between the U.S. compulsion to consume and accumulate versus the comparatively Spartan-like existence of Haitians. Their lack of materialism is heralded as a pattern to model.

When you have fewer material things, it’s always a good example to us, who have so much and just want more (Interview #1).

Here, [life] is money-driven. There, their joy is in spite of not having money. It’s “simpler living” with less stuff (Interview #2)

Like Haiti, I would like the U.S. to be less consumer-oriented, to be humble, and happy—even though all of our needs and wants might not be met (Interview #8).

In making parallels between the simplicity of life and the sort of “freedom from stuff” that exists in Haiti, committee members are making powerful critiques about what they see as the failings of American culture. Importantly, the “culture” that committee members are critiquing must be understood as that of the financially secure, white, suburban middle-class. While perhaps giving lip-service to the importance of family, “successful” Americans—some committee members feel—lose sight of what is really

important in life. Success becomes, in a sense, an iron cage that limits peoples' ability to live fully, making them unaware of the superficiality of their daily concerns vis-à-vis the reality of poverty in the lives of Haitians. Twinning is thought to unlock that cage.

We're spoiled. Until you visit a place like Haiti, you don't have a clue about peoples' struggles, the different ways of looking at and living life.... [I'd like Americans] to be truly appreciative for what we have.... Many people don't appreciate what they have, and people can do without a lot of what they do have (Interview #3)

For many committee members, then, involvement in Haiti twinning allows them to see alternate realities, and it provides a platform for critiquing the forces at work in their own daily lives. By learning about and interacting with "others," committee members are able to question the "taken for granted" parameters of what constitutes success, happiness, and desirability in suburban, white, middle-class Ada. The "others" in this case are not poor Americans, however; committee members do not talk about their privilege with reference to the poor and marginalized in the U.S., although they do acknowledge the relative "gifts" their financially prosperous parish possesses.

Recognition of their relative wealth, however, is linked to parishioners' professional successes. That is, St. Robert and its parishioners are affluent compared to others in the area because parishioners hold good jobs, which they have attained through hard work and education. This parallels a finding by Chris McCollum (2002:114), who in analyzing the life histories of middle-class Americans, found that they portrayed "their professional development as an active process of cultivating and expressing inner aims and abilities." While my interview protocol did not specifically probe this facet of committee member's lives, in general discussions I got the sense that St. Robert's committee members attribute their affluence and professional success to personal

initiative and ambition. The source of their relative privilege is explainable in terms of merit—they earned their positions through hard work and playing by the rules.

From their very specific class and race positions, some committee members tended to generalize their view of the world as in many ways typical of the American experience, writ-large. For example,

I think one of the big problems in the U.S. is that people think their self-value is based on how much they have, how much money they make, how much they own. They'd rather have a \$400,000 house, with both mom and dad working and the kids running wild. In Haiti, there's more value on the family and less on the dollar (Interview #16).

Analysis of their positions of privilege vis-à-vis other Americans is infrequent in committee meetings and in the interviews. But, committee members do clearly recognize their privilege vis-à-vis Haitians. While Haiti committee members do think of poverty as dire or problematic for Haitians, there is at the same time a notion that poverty is somehow “freeing” and allows for an unfettered vision of what is “important in life.”

What really struck me was how happy they are. They don't know [that they're living in poverty]—they have nothing to compare it to (Interview #7).

[They have] more of a joy for life, especially the religious aspects. The gust they put into mass, that would be wonderful [for the U.S.]. People in the U.S., they take communion, but anything they take in from the homily is lost as they try to get out of the parking lot in front of someone else. Haitians have a fundamental pride, even though they were people who had very little monetarily. The way they'd get cleaned up to go to mass, to go out. Their personal dignity is phenomenal (Interview #6).

There are parallels in the academic literature to this kind of thinking. For example, Sandra Harding (1986) and Emily Martin (2001) each discuss the ways that the “standpoint of the oppressed” (Martin 2001:190) can be more complete, more

comprehensive than that of the privileged. Because the poor and powerless are at the bottom of the social hierarchy, they experience pain and humiliation, and in investigating the sources of that suffering, the oppressed come to recognize the social structures working against them. By contrast, the privileged find little conflict between the dominant ideology and their experiences and so have little pushing them to question current social orders. Moreover, because the poor and powerless inhabit two “worlds”—as members of their own communities and as servants and subjects in the worlds of the powerful—they necessarily understand how both worlds operate. In order to survive, they need to know the rules governing life in each milieu. By contrast, the powerful rarely venture into the worlds of the powerless and so have no compelling reason to understand the rules governing life there.

These ideas are partially true for some committee members, who on the one hand come to recognize their privilege as it compares to Haitians but on the other rarely acknowledge it with reference to their positions within the U.S. socioeconomic hierarchy. Moreover, this recognition can be coupled with a romanticized view of what it means to be poor—that it is liberating rather than constraining; hopeful rather than cynical; spiritual rather than material.

But, the romanticization of poverty is not uniform among committee members. Indeed, when asked about the ways they would like the U.S. to be more like Haiti, one woman bluntly answered, “None” (Interview #4). Said another,

Not very many, actually. Many people could be more appreciative of what they have. The people in Haiti appreciate what they have. But, when they’re infested with worms, unable to be taken care of medically, when one in how many kids is dying of malnutrition, there’s no need to emulate that (Interview #10).

In total, six of the twenty-one interviewees said there really was not anything about Haiti that the U.S. should emulate.

Indeed, even among those who felt that Haitians offered good examples for Americans about how to live better and simpler lives, there was at the same time a sense that Haitians themselves were in other ways lacking. One woman, for example, constructed Haitians as naïve and unable to cope with the different material realities in Haiti and the U.S. Responding to the question of whether travel to the U.S. by Haitians was an important feature of twinning, she replied,

No, it's a very bad idea. You give them hope for something they can never attain in Haiti. There, there's no hardwood floors, plaster walls, padded furniture. Bringing them here gives them hope for something they could never achieve in their own country. It's like a glimpse of heaven. It's cruel. Plus, it gives them an impression they can ask for whatever they want.

From her perspective, Haitians should not be “teased” with the hope for a U.S. standard of living. Comparing Americans to Haitians, another said,

I find Americans in general to be honest and forthright. It might make it sound like Haitians are dishonest. But, in the U.S., we have institutional transparency. If we ask certain questions, we'll get truthful answers versus what someone thinks we want to hear. In the U.S., there's personal accountability in that people strive to attain their goals. There isn't the sense that we'll depend on the government to provide for us (Interview #6).

While these assertions above are certainly debatable, across the narratives, this idea that Haitians are somehow less ambitious, lazier, or more dependent or dishonest than Americans was prevalent. I will talk more about this in Chapter Six, in so far as these stereotypes of “underdeveloped” populations exemplify development thinking more broadly. But, it is important to note here the dual “othering” that often characterizes St. Robert – Our Lady relations, this idea that Haitians are very different from Americans.

These imagined differences allow twinning participants to see in Haitians both the ideals that appear lacking in their own lives, while also affirming certain of their own characteristics as superior. Moreover, this attraction – repulsion impulse toward Haitians is often contradictory in nature. For example, many committee members romanticize the lack of materialism and perceived unimportance of work over family in Haiti. At the same time, however, Haitians are also criticized for “lack of entrepreneurial spirit” (Interview #6) or because they “don’t have the same initiative” as Americans.

While committee members focus on Haitians as “others,” they simultaneously focus on their shared identity as Catholics. Despite differences in language, skin color, social location and culture, there is a sense among committee members that everyone is also the “same” in their Catholicism. This shared identity creates “social bridges,” allowing participants to transcend their differences, to a degree, through perceived similarities in belief, religious doctrine, and religious practice. Indeed, a complex mixture of “othering” and what I call “saming”—obfuscating obvious differences in the search for commonality—characterizes committee members’ views of Haitians. And this is most evident in the similarities U.S. participants see between U.S. and Haitian religious orientation. When asked about the differences between U.S. and Haitian Catholics, I was told that Catholics are Catholics wherever they are in the world; a Catholic can walk into mass anywhere and have an immediate understanding of what is going on. Commenting on the power of Catholicism, one man said:

Universality, that’s one of the neat things about being Catholic....What we’re singing, saying, and praying is the same in Verrettes, here in the U.S., in New Zealand. It’s the universality, we’re all one family (Interview #5).

But, it is through this imagined shared identity that the “othering” occurs, as well. By locating themselves within the Catholic Church, committee members often feel they compare unfavorably to Haitian parishioners. As suggested above, many believe that Haitians are more spiritual than Americans, closer to God because of their poverty, less distracted by materialism.

Haitians are more respectful about mass. They wouldn’t ever think to go to mass in jeans. They wear the best they have. Here, people go to church because they “have to go.” It seems like there’s more spirituality there than with people here, at least that’s the impression I got. I didn’t know what they were saying [during mass]. Maybe it’s because they lacked hope. Like, “If God doesn’t help us who will?” Here, it’s more about obligation, “I have to go to church” (Interview #4).

This notion of a special, perhaps more authentic, spirituality in Haiti is reinforced in St. Robert’s church documents, such as the weekly parish bulletin, which sometimes features the writings of committee members. One column, written by a St. Robert parishioner who had recently returned from Haiti, read:

Many of the people I met wear their faith on their “sleeve,” so to speak. They actively seek out the parish priests or each other on a daily basis, and openly welcome and display the presence of God as they proceed through their day. Earlier in my life, I read somewhere that faith is believing when all good sense tells you not to; I reflected upon this many times during the trip. Given the living conditions, economy and political instability in Haiti, good sense alone might tell you that God could not be present. However, the people we met, while not having an abundance of “things,” have boundless faith and believe God is present in their everyday lives, and this sustains them (April 18, 1999).

Another column, reflecting on a mass where “roosters strutted through the yard and a pig snorted” during the service says, “while the mass progressed, it occurred to me how simple and beautiful our faith really is. Unfortunately, in America we tend to clutter it up with wasteful trappings.”

Coming from a wealthy suburban U.S. parish, where SUVs jockey for parking spaces in a ferocious race to make it into church as close to the start time of mass as possible, where manicures, facials, expensive haircuts and the latest fashions are worn by the busy professionals, there are startling different material conditions in Haiti and the U.S. And, it's traveling to Haiti—what one parishioner called, “the Haiti experience”—that allows St. Robert's parishioners to juxtapose their daily reality with that of their Haitian “brothers and sisters.” And, what they find often causes them to question the assumptions they have about consumption and materialism. Reflecting on her trip to Haiti, one woman wrote in the parish bulletin:

As we watched the baptism service, I whispered to Doug that they probably won't use water because it's so scarce. To our surprise a porcelain washtub with water and a plastic cup were brought up to the altar. As I saw this I wept. But, my tears were not for them. They were for us—because we think we have to have a marble Christening bowl (July 18, 1996).

In reality, then, despite some focus on “sameness” through Catholicism, Haiti committee members tend to invest more heavily in notions of difference.

To return to the idea that Haitians are, at once, models to emulate and repudiate, it must be noted that some of the “negative” characteristics attributed to Haitians echo with dominant racist U.S. stereotypes of African Americans. In fact, some committee members made unprompted explicit comparisons between African Americans and Haitians, as described below.²⁷ Perhaps not surprisingly, most members of the Haiti committee were raised in racially and culturally homogenous environments and thus growing up had very little interaction with people of color. Responding to a question

²⁷ Given this, I later added a question to the interview protocol to probe interviewees explanations for African American poverty, thereby making Haitian and African American comparisons overt.

about the types of interactions he had with other “races” or cultures while growing up, one man said,

Very limited. We lived in a white Catholic community. And, the most ethnic person I ever saw was an Italian, who was also Catholic (Interview #12).

Said another,

Almost none. Catholic schools were, ah, predominantly white. As matter of fact, I didn’t go to school with any black kids until high school. And, they weren’t even in my grade. One was ahead of me, and a couple were behind (Interview #13).

In sum, many of those most active on the Haiti committee had few direct or personal experiences with racial “others” during their formative early years.

This is hardly surprising, given that the U.S. itself continues to be a highly racially stratified society. This “racial social geography”—the constitution and mapping of environments in racial and ethnic terms (Frankenberg 1993:44)—is likewise a feature in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Suburban communities, including Ada, continue to be predominantly white,²⁸ a fact mirrored at St. Robert. And yet, a larger public discourse on the importance of racial diversity, inclusion, and tolerance—particularly among white, middle-class Americans—often clashes with the experiences and understandings of committee members’ and their own (latent) racisms.

I can say that the...Haitians are very respectful and dignified. Blacks in America are very snotty. And I have some black friends. But, Haitians are more timid than American black people (Interview #4).

My first visit and the second part of my second was frightening, never having been involved in that level of poverty and never having been around black people (Interview #15).

28 Ada Township’s total population is 9,882, of whom 9,444—or about 96 percent of the population—self-classify as “white” (U.S. Census Bureau 2000).

I own several pieces of rental property, and I rent to a lot of African Americans, probably 30–40 percent are African Americans. With very few exceptions, the biggest thing I see in regards to them is their lack of education. You don't see any real need for an education. An education isn't a priority for them. I think it's just been passed down from father to son, mother to daughter for a hundred, two hundred years. Education is not a big thing in their families. That's not necessarily true of all African Americans, but with the people I deal with it is. They're poorly educated, and they have low paying jobs as a result. A lot of them want more but aren't willing to do what it takes to get more. They feel it's the government's job to give handouts. Sometimes we do too much of that, other times not enough.

Significantly, this emphasis on education characterizes St. Robert's overall mission in Haiti. Emphasizing schooling, literacy, and development, nearly every interviewee mentioned the importance of educating Haiti's citizenry, as I talk about elsewhere. But, here I want to suggest that the twinning program provides some committee members a relatively "safe" platform through which to "work out" issues of identity, race, and racism. As Frankenberg (1993:44) discusses in her exploration of racial identity and racism of white women in the U.S., daily environments help shape racism and ground it materially in particular social, historical and political environments. For twinning participants who travel to Haiti—again, a pivotal and life altering experience for many—the racial geography becomes unanchored and detached. Haiti committee members become "defamiliarized" from their usual surroundings (Frankenberg 1993:44). Their privilege vis-à-vis Haitians—in terms of race, class, and nationality—becomes visible through twinning. They become aware of their own ability to access clean drinking water with ease, to have convenient transportation, to interact with people who are like themselves, to travel freely across borders, to choose a career.

This type of “othering” complicates ideas raised by Escobar (1995:30), who suggests that development has proceeded by “medicalization of the political gaze” whereby popular classes are perceived not in racial terms, but as “diseased, underfed, uneducated, and physiologically weak masses.” This is only partially the case among St. Robert’s twinning committee, where Haitians *are racialized* and constructed as physiologically compromised, but who are also held as models to emulate, in many regards.

How can this dichotomous understanding of Haitians be explained? Typically, the construction of “difference” is theorized to include stigmatization and hierarchizing. As Abu-Lughod (1993:13) suggests, “A difference between self and other will always be hierarchical because the self is sensed as primary, self-formed, active, and complex, if not positive. At the very least, the self is always the interpreter and the other the interpreted.” And yet, members of the Haiti committee confound this stylized understanding, since they in some ways hierarchize Haitians above themselves, in terms of “goodness,” religiosity, and commitment to family.

I think parallels might be made between the “categories of analysis” that twinning participants employ to understand who they are in relation to Haitians and Chandra Talpade Mohanty’s (1997:81) work on Western feminism, which takes “women” as a “category of analysis.” Mohanty explains this as “the crucial assumption that all of us of the same gender, across classes and cultures, [that we] are somehow socially constituted as a homogenous group.” This a priori definition of sameness is present in twinning, as well—where the commonality is Catholicism. I will not go so far as to assert that St. Robert’s parishioners imagine themselves and Haitians to be a

“homogenous group” of Catholics; clearly, they do not. But, this shared identity provides the entry point for imaging Haitians as “other” and for ultimately constituting Haitians themselves as a “homogenous group.” This encourages a reading of Haitians whereby they all “have similar problems and needs...similar interests and goals” (Mohanty 1997:83). And, it disallows, to a large extent, internal differences: in identity, wealth, power, and the like.

Thinking About Haiti

To each of the interviewees, all but two of whom have traveled to Haiti, I posed the question “When you think of Haiti, what are the first five words that come to mind?” Interviewees tended to quickly list the first few words that popped into their heads, though some gave more elaborate answers using phrases or full sentences. To gauge how people generally thought about Haiti, and whether their perceptions mirrored the problematic negative constructions dominant in U.S. culture (e.g., see Farmer 1992), I sorted answers into what might be considered positive, negative, and neutral categories.

Somewhat surprisingly, the responses did not reflect broader stereotypes often cited as typically held by Americans—e.g., AIDS, vodou, boat people. Of the eighty-seven answers I collected, thirty-three would generally be considered positive, forty-six as negative, and eight as neutral. So, while slightly more than half of the answers might be classified as negative images of Haiti, overall interviewees gave a fairly diverse range of answers—perhaps reflecting the contradictions in identifying a people and place as both deficient and inspiring at the same time, that is, as illiterate, diseased, and hungry on the one hand, and family-oriented, spiritual, and non-materialistic on the other.

Given the focus of St. Robert's twinning on mitigating poverty at Our Lady, as well as the strong reactions committee members have to the material reality in Haiti, it is not surprising poverty was the most cited response, talked about by thirteen of twenty-one interviewees. In fact, it is remarkable that more people did not mention it. Moreover, given current rates of AIDS in Haiti—HIV prevalence is around 5.6 percent (UNDP 2004), as well as the stigmatizing of Haitians as a “risk group” for AIDS in the 1980s U.S. (see Farmer 1992)—it is also noteworthy that only one person responded to this question by mentioning AIDS. Importantly, this person was not simply reciting the U.S. stereotype; instead, this particular man had been personally affected by AIDS, having recently lost a dear Haitian friend to the disease.

Overall, the negative conceptualizations of Haiti focused more on its suppression or oppression (e.g., government failure, injustice, isolation) than on sensational stereotypes (e.g., Vodou, AIDS, boat people), as can be seen in Table 4.2. At the same time, there was a clear pattern again in perceptions of Haiti as deficient, e.g., lacking adequate food, environmental quality, and education—all problems St. Robert sees itself as capable of addressing, if not on a national scale, at least locally. Responding to question about his hopes for Haiti, one man said,

[My wish is] that the people will develop their own visions for their country and have the ability to implement them. [TH: Do you think this will ever happen?] Hmm, probably not. At the national level, probably not. But, I can work at the local level (Interview #2).

TABLE 4.2 FIVE WORDS THAT COME TO MIND REGARDING HAITI

Positive (33)	Negative (46)	Neutral (8)
Beauty (3)	Poverty / Poor (13)	Hot (3)
Children (3)	Hopeless (3)	Different world
Dignity (3)	Heavily populated (2)	Education
Friends (3)	Hungry (2)	Life-altering
Joy (3)	Sad (2)	Political
Happy (2)	AIDS	Trade school
Love (2)	Corrupt government	
Acceptance	Deplorable	
Art	Depressed	
Awareness	Exploited	
Determination	How they can produce enough food just to feed the population	
Energy—energetic	Incomprehensible (sic)	
Family	Injustice	
Friendly	Isolation	
Grateful	Lack of foliage	
Incredible	Lack of life quality	
Loveable	Lack of quality	
Opportunity	Need	
Patience	Need a dramatic shift in focus	
Pride	Neglected	
Smiles	Oppression	
	People that want more but probably will never have more because of the political situation	
	Primitive	
	Smells	
	Starvation	
	Struggling	
	Undeveloped	
	Uneducated	
	Unrest	

But, in response to other questions (e.g., “How did you get involved in twinning?”), Haitians were criticized for other perceived “problems.” For example, four people declared “sharing” among Haitians to be problematic. Ironically, Haitians were critiqued from both angles: for sharing too much with others and for not sharing enough. For example, one woman, in talking about the “ingrained attitudes” that Haitians need to “overcome,” said:

Well, I think there's a kind of a bullying—I can't think of the word—when someone has something, and they try to share it (a nice word for it). But, it's really not so nice; they're extorting things. Whenever we have someone we want to give things to, they'll be asked by everyone they know for a piece of it. You'll be told it's the “Haitian way,” but it's discouraging (Interview #1).

Indeed, Haitian peasants—like poor people in many places—are well-known for sharing as a way to mitigate risk and help “level” wealth disparities (e.g., see Smith 2001). Sharing is a strategy that allows families or groups to minimize their economic vulnerability. “If I share with you today, when I need help, I can call upon you tomorrow.” But, sharing is “discouraging” to those in Michigan, who intend to help certain individuals, only to find their intended beneficiary has willingly (or unwillingly) shared his or her newfound resources across a social network. In fact, sharing is not only discouraging, it is also discouraged, as in the case of the school food project mentioned earlier. Those deemed outside the targeted population for food aid were to be cut-off from school lunch project. “We are trying to actively dissuade parishioners from sharing meals” as one man put it (Interview #6).

At the same time, however, Haitians are also perceived to be stingy, for not sharing enough.

I think that mentality of not sharing, that mentality of taking what they can get for themselves and not sharing it around to help our brothers and sisters [is a problem] (Interview #11).

This idea of sharing (or not) did not come out in the free-listing exercise, however, but was only mentioned in other sections of the interview.

I think these contradictory ideas might stem from some committee members' unclear sense of who Haitian peasants “are” and a general unfamiliarity with the coping mechanisms of the poor. As discussed elsewhere in the dissertation, committee

members often interact with Haitian twinning participants in moderated and buffered ways. The inability to “sit in the mud” with Haitian participants prevents most St. Robert’s twinning participants from gaining a grounded understanding of what might characterize “typical Haitian culture,” if such a thing even exists. Instead, perceptions of sharing, whether it is practiced, and whether it is a problem, are based on the views of the Haitian priests, Tom, and others in Haiti as they intersect with the committee’s ideas about who should benefit from twinning.

In terms of the positive traits imagined, the most frequently cited focused on the qualities of Haiti’s people. That is, while most of the negative responses were more broadly focused on what’s wrong with Haiti—as a country or as a socioeconomic / sociopolitical system—interviewees, when responding positively to the question, tended to describe traits they imagined Haiti’s people possess. Again, reflecting the narratives introduced above, answers included “dignity,” “joy,” “happy.” Haitians, despite limitations of poverty, are thought to evince a certain *joi de vivre* and self-respect that translates into “smiles,” “pride,” and “lovability.” Haitians are thought to be extraordinary examples of how the human spirit persists in spite of—or perhaps because of—economic and political limitations. The traits seen to be more destructive or harmful to Haiti’s people—e.g., laziness, lack of ingenuity, or evasiveness—and mentioned elsewhere in interviewees’ narratives were missing in responses to this question. This suggests that while Haitians can be—and often are—conceptualized in negative terms, perhaps these are not foremost in most committee members’ minds. Rather, they are called upon as a way to explain why Haiti is so poor and to legitimize the need for St. Robert’s intervention, as will be discussed in Chapters Five and Six.

Conclusion

St. Robert is a large, active, affluent parish, with an array of programs and projects led by and peopled by its laity. The Haiti program, St. Robert's largest in terms of budget, is guided by a core of committed parishioners who give time, talent, and often money to facilitating and maintaining links to Our Lady parish in Verrettes. The committee is a loosely-knit collective, comprised of about twenty-five central members important to shaping St. Robert's twinning program. They are tasked with implementing St. Robert's vision for its relationship to Our Lady—even when that vision is not always readily apparent to them.

St. Robert's Haiti committee does not meet often—usually once every three or four months, when something pressing requires discussion. A “core” of eight to twelve people is likely to attend any given meeting, meaning the overall direction of St. Robert's Haiti program tends to be determined by relatively few people. Larger discussions involving more people are sometimes held via the committee email list, but the list—as well as the parish bulletin—is more a conduit for disseminating information than a forum for dialogue.

From the beginning of St. Robert's ties to Our Lady, Haiti committee meetings have been led by Cassie, a strong and sometimes controversial leader who initiated and built the twinning program. Cassie's vision for twinning has guided both the development of projects in Haiti and the structuring of the Haiti committee at St. Robert. The result is a rather centralized program, and during my time observing the committee, 2001-2004, one that few “newcomers” join. But, with Cassie's departure from St. Robert, and her gradual withdrawal from the Haiti committee, the nature and

formation of the committee may change. Some speculate, the twinning itself may not survive. But, with the “passing of the torch” underway, the clear commitment of new co-chair Dennis, as well as the crucial support of Sr. Joan to maintaining the twinning, it certainly appears the program will survive Cassie’s exit.

The goals or purpose of St. Robert’s Haiti program are not always clear to committee members. While many emphasize the importance of supporting education and literacy in Haiti, others highlight broader goals of “helping” Haitians or promoting development. A few members, including two especially active in twinning, said they did not know what the goals of twinning were. Their uncertainty might reflect the contradictions and challenges inherent in forging these types of transnational, cross-cultural relationships.

Committee members tend to conceive of Haitians in simple terms; there is a consistent homogenizing of Haitians, with the poor and marginalized taken to be typical “Haitians” and others (elites, the middle-class, immigrants) ignored or vilified, as will be discussed in later chapters. Committee members, then, are disposed to speak in generalities about “Haitians,” who they are, the traits they possess. And, these generalities are generally constructed in two opposing ways. On the one hand, Haitians are admired for their dignity, for their fortitude, for their focus on family. There is a sense that—by having few material possessions—Haitians are somehow able to live more meaningful, joyful lives than Americans. On the other hand, Haitians are also ridiculed for their unworldliness, perceived laziness, or dependency on outsiders. They are blamed for not being industrious enough to escape the poverty that binds them and

so in need of outside help—which, in this case, is delivered predominantly via education.

These twin conceptualizations—Haitians as models to emulate and repudiate—reveal a central feature of twinning: that it rests on perceived inherent “differences” between Haitians and Americans, despite the “saming” that occurs under the banner of Catholicism. Moreover, twinning is predicated on the need to correct the seeming deficiencies of Haiti / Haitians, as well as their “otherness.” Yet, committee members tend not to adopt or verbalize the negative stereotypes of Haitians that predominate in the U.S., e.g., AIDS, Vodou, boat people. Instead, as will be discussed in later chapters, their “negative” assessments of Haitians tend to reflect dominant development discourses about “underdeveloped populations.”

CHAPTER FIVE: CRAFTING DEVELOPMENT AT ST. ROBERT

While parishioners at St. Robert do not explicitly situate their Haiti program within a larger paradigm of globalization and NGO-ization, most on the Haiti committee are clear that their program intends to promote development in Haiti. This begs the question, what do St. Robert's committee members mean by development? How do they define it? How do they attempt to translate these conceptualizations into actual programs and policies? Moreover, in what—if any— way do they see their program as missionary work?

Theorizing Development

At the close of a committee meeting held in March 2004, I did a short free-listing exercise with the seven members present (an eighth had to leave early.) To the two men and five women, I gave a sheet of paper, divided into three columns. I asked first “When you think about development, about what it means to be developed, what sorts of things come to mind?” I requested that they list their replies, as quickly as they could, in the left column. After a few minutes, I asked them to “rank” their answers in the center column in order of importance—placing those features they thought most central to development at the top. In the right column, they then commented on why they ordered their lists as they did.

While they cannot be generalized to the wider population at St. Robert, or even to the remainder of the committee, the results do point to important themes running both through committee meetings, as well as the narratives, as discussed below.

As the material in Table 5.1 shows, respondents used diverse terminology in their freelisting of development's features.

TABLE 5.1 FREELISTING DEVELOPMENT EXERCISE

Agricultural / Sustainable agriculture (3 respondents)
Aid / Financial Aid (2 respondents)
Assistance
Basic needs
Carpentry / Masonry (2 respondents)
Clothing
Communication
Cottage industry
Credit
Cultural
Democracy
Dialogue
Economic
Economic Stability + base
Education (6 respondents)
Electricity
Employment
End of poverty
Equality
Farms – agriculture, trees, animals
Food (3 respondents)
Freedom of religion
Freedom of speech
Government cooperation
Health care / Clinics / Hospitals (3 respondents)
Hope
Hotels / Resorts (2 respondents)
Housing
Implements for work
Independence
Infrastructure (2 respondents)
Job security
Loan programs / Microbusiness help / aid (3 respondents)
Manufacturing
Markets (free)
Military
Mobility
Partnerships
Political
Possibilities
Prosperity
Restaurants
Roads (2 respondents)

Schools
Small business
Stores for people to purchase needed items in
Tools to farm
Transportation
Water
Women

Only a few features were listed by two or more people: agriculture, food, infrastructure, roads, health care, business help. Education, not surprisingly, was mentioned by six of the seven members—and ranked as most important by two. But, the majority of responses—forty items—were listed only once, i.e., by one person.²⁹

This might be taken to suggest development is conceptualized in broad terms, which may or may not be shared among committee members. However, taken together, the narratives, committee meetings, and freelisting exercise indicate that, in fact, development among St. Robert's Haiti committee does have a fairly rigid framework, and it is within this frame that diverse conceptualizations are debated and considered.

Developing People

As I discussed in Chapter Four, twinning rests on dual conceptualizations of Haitians as models to admire and cases to “fix” through outside intervention. Haitians are at once esteemed and ridiculed for their seeming “difference,” and nowhere is this clearer than in discussions about development and its purpose in Haiti.

Complementing the freelisting exercise just introduced, I asked all interviewees, “How do you define development? Progress? The ‘good life’?” And, the answers I received ranged from idealistic, such as “encouraging [Haitians] to use their gifts, their intelligence, their generosity, and their talents” to the concrete, “good health, good food, and water.” (See Figure 5.1.) But, an overriding theme that flowed through most of the

²⁹ Particularly striking is the difference in number of responses made by women versus men. Obviously, having only administered the free-listing exercise to a total of seven people, generalizations cannot be drawn from the data. But, it is worth pointing out that the five women respondents averaged 12.2 responses per person, compared to the men's three.

narratives was this idea of developing people, of equipping Haitians with the skills necessary to become self-sufficient. There's a real sense that St. Robert is providing Haitians with the skills needed to "take care of themselves" (Interview #21). St. Robert's emphasis on education demonstrates this. As one man said, through twinning,

you're developing the human spirit. More children are getting an education. Education precedes quality of life. If you can't innovate, open your own business, then you're destined to work for someone else or to be unemployed. You build a workforce by educating it (Interview #12).

Overall, for St. Robert's Haiti program, development tends to focus on "bettering" individuals and the community more than on reforming the larger "system" that keeps Haitians impoverished, e.g. structural debt, political economy, predatory states (e.g., see DeWind and Kinley 1998; Dupuy 1997; Farmer 2004, 1994, 1992). The problems Haitians face can be overcome through education. Given very few people had much knowledge of Haiti before the twinning began (e.g., TH: What did you know about Haitian history and culture before joining the twinning? Interviewee #11: Nothing. I didn't even know where Haiti was.), it is not unexpected that committee members tend not to analyze Haiti's woes within a more macro-frame. Indeed, to do so might result in a "paralysis of scale" whereby participants undertake no action because the task before them seems too large, too deeply rooted to affect (Poppendieck 1998).

That said, those active in twinning do face questions about its purpose and about how much "good" can really be accomplished in Haiti.

I have friends who ask me, "How much good are you doing in Haiti? What kind of impact can you really have?" In the past 25 years, there are probably 2000 churches working in Haiti.... It's like taking a cup of water out of a big lake. Nobody notices. But, we're doing good. They're dependent upon us to help them. And, we're probably making it so some kids don't die (Interview #19).

FIGURE 5.1 DEFINING DEVELOPMENT, PROGRESS, THE “GOOD LIFE”

FIGURE 3.1 DEFINING DEVELOPMENT, PROGRESS, THE "GOOD LIFE"			
Basic Needs Met			
Baby shots	Basic needs	Clothing Food (6)	Good health
Health clinics	Healthcare (2)	Hospitals	Housing
Medical progress	Necessities of life	Poverty, not so much	Shelter
Water (9)			
Government			
Democracy (2)	Basic human rights & freedoms		Government
Government-sponsored, not church	"Voice" and political representation		
Law and Order			
Courts	Judicial system	Law and order	Police
Infrastructure			
Electricity (2)	Gas	Infrastructure (3)	Roads (2)
Sanitary	Sanitation	Septic systems	Sewer
Education			
Community things: schools, not only for the children but the adults who have missed it			
Education (9)	French vs. Creole		Schools
Self-Sufficiency			
Self-sufficient (2)			
Agriculture			
Agriculture (2)	Farming (2)		Land productivity
Work			
Jobs (3)	Income		Make a living (4)
Occupations	Incentives to motivate people to work		
More Opportunities			
Opportunities (4)	Improving people's chances		
Outlook			
Hope for future	Using gifts, intelligence, generosity		Respect
Dependability			
Progress			
Improvement	More modern.	Progressing	Self-Improvements
Moving about doing their daily business	Doesn't look like a developed community in Michigan		
Economy			
House Construction	Markets (2)	Marketing products	Manufacturing / Factories
Monetary systems in order			
Collaborations			
Grassroots, hands-on people-oriented action plan			
Partnerships, ongoing relationship with goals and understanding.			
Miscellaneous			
Occupied meaningfully	Sustainability	Systems to care for those needing help	

In fact, there are several “refrains” repeated within twinning circles to address this critique. One, which I first heard from Doug, Grand Rapids’ Haiti Outreach Program coordinator, tells the story of a young man walking along the beach, throwing beached starfish back into the ocean. Noting the beach was covered in starfish, a skeptic asks the man what he’s doing. “Can’t you see that you’ll never make a difference? You can’t even begin to save all the dying starfish.” To this, the young man replies, “Maybe not, but I’m making a difference to this starfish,” which he tosses back into the water.

Poppendieck (1998:307) refers to this as “partialization,” i.e., when a problem just seems too large or overwhelming, it is broken into manageable “pieces” that can be digested.

There is certainly some sense among those on the committee that Haiti’s problems far exceed St. Robert’s ability to remedy them. In responding to the question of whether twinning attempts to “develop” Verrettes, one man commented:

Well, yea, I think so. They’re providing education for kids within the parish. They’re sponsoring kids to go onto high school and the university. Unfortunately, it’s a small impact on numbers....I think they’re doing a good job as far as taking a small part of population and improving them. Unfortunately, we’re dealing with at most a couple hundred people, and only some of those are being helped by the trade school... (Interview #13).

But, for most committee members, rather than dwelling on problems outside their sphere of influence, they focus on “saving” the starfish within their reach: those at Our Lady.

“I’m not there to help the nation, Haiti. I’m here to help Verrettes” (Interview #19).

Rather than tracing Haiti’s poverty to its historical position on the “periphery” of the world economic system, to its “pariah” status following independence, or to the debt with which it has been saddled for nearly its entire history, St. Robert’s committee members look to address more micro-level features they are personally able to witness and draw meaning from: hunger, illiteracy, unemployment, lack of education. As such,

it might logically follow that their efforts are concentrated on “developing people” as a necessary first step to developing Haiti.

And yet, these goals sometimes can come across as overly simplistic, sometimes blatantly paternalistic. There is a persistent assumption that because Haiti’s peasantry is largely illiterate and unschooled, they cannot fully undertake—or even envision—their own development. For example, responding to a question about her wishes for Haiti, one woman stated:

Interview #1: That they will develop their own visions for their country and have the ability to implement them.

TH: Do you think this will ever happen?

Interview #1: Hmmm, probably not. At the national level, probably not. But, I can work at the local level.

Talking about what it means for a community to be developed, another said:

Buildings [are important], but not as much as the people themselves having some goals, some direction....I think [twinning] attempts to provide an avenue for people to do their own self-improvements. I sincerely believe the educational aspects alone would be enough to help the people move on (Interview #11).

There is a sense that by equipping Haiti’s poor with certain “tools”—e.g., the ability to think critically, problem-solve, and the like, achieved via education—they will be able to pull themselves up by the bootstraps and do better for themselves. Clearly, this is an idea that reverberates strongly in the consciousness of these white, middle-class developers, who themselves were raised in a milieu where education and hard-work were touted as the way to attain the “American dream.” Again, the larger structural features limiting peoples’ opportunities to do this are largely ignored: national debt, concentration of wealth both within Haiti and the global system, and the like. And yet, it is precisely these

more structural features that seemingly must be addressed in order to create sustainable systems of justice and opportunity in Haiti.

The notion of bettering Haitians is not limited to formally educating, however. Some go farther in talking about developing a more sophisticated—more cultivated—peasantry. In explaining her conceptualizations of development, one woman addressed her perceptions about the links between language and opportunity for “advancement.”

I'd like to see better-educated people [in Haiti]. I'd love to see them abandon Creole and go with French. Creole is not an educated language, and without language, they won't be able to seize opportunities, to make informed decisions (Interview #9).

And, another took up what she saw to be a sort of environmental illiteracy:

If they had a forest, they could be hunters and gatherers. But, there is no forest, and there's nothing to gather. They don't seem to have same respect for their environment. Here, you wouldn't open a candy bar and throw the wrapper on the ground. Well, we do [throw it on the ground]. But, there everyone does. They open a can of pop, and throw the can on the ground. They have no understanding of how their actions affect the environment. Or, maybe they're just not concerned about that, I don't know (Interview #4).

Quotes like these, and those presented earlier, offer insight into a larger assumption that Haitians need to be changed—that, as they are, Haitians are both deficient and inadequate. To “fix” Haiti requires “fixing” its people. And, the first step in fixing Haiti's people is by educating them.

In explaining her ranking of “education” as most important in the freelist exercise, one woman emphasized that “in order for all else to happen,” Haitians must first be educated (Respondent #9). Said another, also ranking education as most important: “Without education, the people can't make informed decisions about their lives, their jobs, government, etc.” (Respondent #3). Some take these ideas even farther to suggest

that Haitians, in their current state, are simply incapable of leading themselves: “We actually should choose and select their government, help put in power, just as we’re doing in Iraq...[to promote] Christian values and integrity” (Interview #12). And, as another said, “I did write to Bill Gates asking if he’d consider buying Haiti and fixing it [laughs]. I didn’t get a reply” (Interview #10).

The role of government is actually a central feature in several of the narratives and will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Six. But, I bring it up here to illustrate the idea that, in the view of some participants, Haitians—as they stand now—are in need of reformation. Development can and will only proceed once Haitians are able to become educated enough to assess their situations, forge their own visions, and act in their own best interests (e.g., not duped into thinking Creole is a real language), and such visions will emerge primarily via outside intervention. Or, as another man suggested, once appropriate leadership is nurtured through intervention.

I’m really hoping that one of these kids that we’re taking care of—that we’re feeding, educating—goes onto to be shining star. Not that worker bees can’t be. But, I hope at some point, we create leadership down there, so that some of those kids will go on to help lead their country (Interview #19).

Both the interviews and freelisting exercise, then, highlight the “need” to develop people, to encourage education. Education, it is believed, will unlock Haitians’ potential, allow them to finally assess their situations, and formulate concrete plans for betterment. These are not themes unique to St. Robert’s twinning, however. Rather, they are part of a larger frame through which Haitians are typically viewed by “outsiders” working for development, as will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Six.

Grounding Development Locally

A second theme offered by St. Robert's Haiti committee members serves as an interesting counter-point to this idea of developing people: the notion that development must be grounded locally. That is, despite characterizing Haitians as “backwards” and in need of education before development can proceed, a surprising number of people also spoke of being sensitive to “local” Haitian conceptualizations of development, which are thought to differ from those of Americans.

In responding to the question of how she defines development, one woman (also quoted in the previous sub-section) remarked:

Well, actually, that's sort of one of my issues. We cannot inflict our idea of development on the Haitians. We need to know where they're coming from. If they're happy with their houses, why do we have to come in and tell them they need flush toilets and tile? Clean, safe shelter and clean water and a way to produce their own food, that'd be development for Haiti. To go in and build high-rise apartments for Haiti, that just wouldn't work (Interview #4).

This woman is at once arguing for a locally-grounded development while also imaging the “local” in Haiti contrasts with what would constitute development in the U.S. For her, meeting basic needs would be development in the Haitian context. Indeed, this idea of meeting basic needs was voiced by most interviewees, as well as respondents to the freelisting exercise. While only a couple of people actually used the term “basic needs,” almost everyone (nineteen of twenty-one interviewees) mentioned at least one feature of a basic needs approach: e.g., food, water, shelter, the ability to make a living, healthcare. These are features of development that arise from their own personal experiences of what is “missing” in Haiti, as well as the needs expressed by Father Jean and others in Haiti.

By emphasizing basic needs, committee members are implying that Haitians and Americans may have different desires, different goals—at the very least, different

priorities for development. That is, what would be “development” for Haiti is different from what would be considered “development” for the U.S. Importantly, these perceived divergent visions of development are again centered around notions of what is lacking in Haiti, but they are at the same time critiques of U.S.-styled “over-development.”

Commenting on growth in Grand Rapids, for example, one woman remarked,

Too many ways, there are too many ways of viewing development. Alpine Avenue, in this town, is developing in leaps and bounds....There’s over-development, you know, building up too many homes, whatever, within in a size of a half acre or acre. That can destroy nature. If that happens in a particular area of open space or green hills, that can rob an entire area of wildlife. By many standards, we’re overdeveloped (Interview #3).

In a similar vein, another explained,

I guess [development] would mean a continual improvement, with excesses not the goal, but sustainability, dependability. There may not be a great amount of income, but there would be income this week and next. Even if there was a catastrophic event, agriculture would be there. There’d be hope for the future, that things will improve (Interview #6).

Excesses are not the goal of development, too many sub-divisions, too much traffic are not, either. By holding up U.S. over-consumption and suburban sprawl as models to avoid, committee members are in part commenting on their aspirations for their own society, rather than those for Haiti. Thus, what is taken to be “local” in Haiti is, in some ways, what is imagined to be contrary to the U.S.

Nurturing a local-level orientation to Haiti is an explicit feature of twinning, as discussed in previous chapters. Twinning is touted as the largest “citizen-to-citizen network” linking the U.S. and Haiti, and PTPA emphasizes the people-to-people benefits of directly linking individual parishes to one another: participants are supposed to become immersed, to a degree, in the local, lived reality of their parish twin. Moreover,

the program also stresses that each parish has gifts to offer the other. Whereas the U.S. parish primarily offers gifts of money and other material support, the Haitian parish is thought to provide a spiritual richness, a different cultural reality, and a new way of understanding one's place in the world.

In short, the rhetoric of twinning sometimes closely aligns with committee member's perceptions of what Haiti and Haitians reveal to them: examples of how to be more appreciative, less consumer-oriented, more family focused. And, this assessment of Haitians' "strengths"—again, focused on their difference from Americans—becomes translated into a notion that Haiti's development must likewise be Haiti-generated, so as to not squelch those desirable attributes. The implicit—and often explicit—critique of Americanism again comes to the fore.

We need to stop thinking about development from an American perspective. Development needs to be from a grassroots perspective, a hands-on people-oriented action plan that is long-term (Interview #5).

But, some go further to suggest that development—wherever undertaken—should be conceived of in local terms. That is, rather than suggesting only Haitians are different from Americans, and therefore will hold different notions about what development should mean to their communities, some propose a more general understanding of the need to ground development locally, wherever it occurs. In explaining his ranking of assistance, dialogue, and aid as most important to development, one man said:

I think that development will be received differently by various cultures. So, first offer to assist them with what they would like to accomplish. Obviously, a constant dialogue would be necessary to understand what they need. Then, [provide] the aid (Respondent #8).

In fact, this is exactly what St. Robert's twinning program seeks to do, as discussed in the following sub-section.

Professional Practice: Parishioners as Developers

Thus far, I have suggested that while those active in St. Robert's Haiti twinning program often conceive of development in diverse terms, they also find common ground around notions of developing Haiti's people and situating development in (supposedly) local terms. In this next section, I move beyond the imagining of development to the way it is carried out, interpreted, reworked, and challenged by the Haiti committee.

As discussed in Chapter Three, the meanings attached to development are fluid, mixed, and shifting, and they vary according to what people are doing, when they're doing it, who they're talking to (Gardner 1996). As such, it is necessary to consider both what people say about their motivations, as well as what they actually do (Long 1992; 2000). St. Robert sponsors a number of projects in Our Lady parish: a school lunch project, student sponsorships, agricultural extension, microcredit, augmenting teachers salaries, trade school. The parish also sends money for church repairs and necessities, catechism books, and other goods or services requested by Father Yvens. St. Robert ships medicines to Haiti regularly, and—though less so now in the 2000s than in the 1990s—sometimes other materials or goods (e.g., books, sewing machines, bikes, tool kits, etc). At a glance, the many projects and activities St. Robert's funds indeed seem to reflect the broad consensus that development must focus on developing Haiti's people and must be locally-oriented. But, a closer look at the projects also suggests some fluidity and disjuncture, as well.

As mentioned earlier, all of the projects currently sponsored by St. Robert were in place by the time I entered onto the committee in 2001. As such, I have relied on what others have told me, as well as on written documentation (e.g., bulletins, correspondence,

meeting minutes) to trace these projects' creation. Moreover, during my extended stay in Verrettes (January - March 2002), I had the chance to see many of these projects "in action." Piecing together the projects' histories with what I observed, I suggest that, overall, St. Robert's Haiti program does translate its discourses of "developing people" into actual projects they believe will do that—again, primarily through education.

The "problem" St. Robert faces is that it cannot "effectively" administer the projects, enroll and monitor the beneficiaries, or evaluate its "successes" from afar. Rather, because twinning is intended to be a "partnership" between the U.S. and Haitian parish, and presumably because the U.S. parish is simply providing the material resources to meet the needs identified by the Haitian parish, the St. Robert program funnels its funds primarily through the priests of Our Lady parish in Haiti. Our Lady is then tasked with all phases of actual project implementation and administration.

When St. Robert began twinning with Our Lady in 1995, the then priest—Father Jean—had an amicable relationship with St. Robert. He and the Haiti committee in Michigan worked together well, and the folks at St. Robert trusted that he was generally a "good steward" of the twinning money. And, as discussed in Chapter One, many of the programs that St. Robert first began funding—student sponsorships, the food project, teachers' salary augmentations—arose at the request of Father Jean.

Yet, the St. Robert – Our Lady twinning has been under tremendous strain since Father Jean left Our Lady in late 2001. Promoted to a more senior position, Father Jean now is assigned to the cathedral in Gonaives. Taking his place in Verrettes, Father Yvens has faced a not always welcoming Haiti committee in the U.S. Indeed, some on St. Robert's Haiti committee strenuously objected to Father Jean's transfer, even going so far

as to contact Father Jean's "boss," the Bishop of Gonaives, to ask that Father Jean be permitted to stay at Our Lady. Committee members were concerned about the fate of the many projects underway in Verrettes, about whether St. Robert would have a good rapport with a new priest, about the ability of a new priest to manage the extensive projects already underway. It was with great skepticism and reservation that St. Robert's Haiti committee accepted Father Jean's transfer from Our Lady.

This was the climate into which Father Yvens entered as new head pastor of Our Lady in January 2002. Father Yvens is perceived to be very different from Father Jean. While Jean was gregarious, hospitable, and charming, Father Yvens is much more reserved, some even say "shy," less inclined to host visitors from Michigan, and more reticent about communications. The Haiti committee feared the "new" priest of Our Lady would not be a "suitable" replacement for Father Jean, and they feel that in many ways their fears are being borne out.

For a number of reasons, real tension now characterizes the relationship between St. Robert's and Father Yvens. In part, St. Robert's Haiti committee wonders whether Father Yvens is really trustworthy. Some trace the fallout to the "problem with the church pews." From several sources, I heard that Father had requested money to build pews for the church. He then used some of that money to fund a backyard improvement project, including a gate and new walkway leading from the rectory to the church next door. These improvements were "discovered" by a couple of St. Robert's committee members during their visit to Verrettes. Asked where he had found the money to pay for the improvements, Father Yvens replied, from money left over from the pews' project.

But, shortly thereafter, Father approached St. Robert for additional pew money, saying more pews were needed. St. Robert committee members did not respond favorably.

We said no, they should've built more church pews with the money we gave them. Father probably felt he had a lot more discretion with that money than we felt. I understand that he even mentioned it in church. "White people come here and tell us to spend more on church pews" (Interview #1).

A tension necessarily undergirds twinning relationships. On the one hand, twinning is supposed to be predicated on mutuality and respect, the recognition that both parties are equal partners in the relationship. But, on the other hand, having material and financial resources to bestow upon one's "partner" almost necessarily ensures that a "benefactor - beneficiary" relationship results, especially when the money is supposed to flow for specified purposes. St. Robert feels compelled to "protect the intention of the donors," from whom they collect funds; this requires that they impose restrictions on how money can be spent in Haiti. Obviously, such restrictions reinforce the lopsidedness of St. Robert's economically more powerful position and—especially for the priest in Haiti—expose the illusion that twinning is really an equal partnering.

Several people on the Haiti committee and in Haiti have suggested that Father Yvens is not happy with his post at Our Lady. Not only is he thought to be accustomed to "city life," he is believed to be upset about having to administer the St. Robert's funded projects. In fact, one story widely circulating among committee members since shortly after Father Yvens' arrival suggests that Father Yvens sees his primary role as a priest, not a development worker or administrator. Some committee members believe that Father Yvens feels pulled away from his pastoral duties by the extra work that comes with running the many projects St. Robert sponsors in Haiti. Someone even suggested

that perhaps Father Yvens has been unfairly burdened by the multiple obligations that come with being head pastor at Our Lady. “He had no idea all these programs were going on [when he took over Our Lady.] He just walked into it.” These perceptions of Father Yvens’ unease are called upon to explain the awkward relationship between Father Yvens and St. Robert.

This leads back to the discourse, especially advanced in the interviews, that development needs to be “locally grounded” in order to be meaningful and relevant. As mentioned earlier, twinning actually rests on the centrality of the priests in Haiti working in concert with committees in the U.S. In and of itself, this orientation raises questions about: 1) how well priests (who are highly educated and respected compared to their parishioners) are able to accurately gauge the needs of their communities; 2) on what basis priests make their recommendations; 3) how to best access and assess the “local.”

While Haiti committee members do travel to Haiti, without the benefit of speaking Creole, they are beholden to translators—often the priests themselves—to make sense of what they are seeing, hearing, and experiencing. Hence, the centrality of the priest is fortified, and the “local” is interpreted and reinterpreted through his eyes. The primary way for St. Robert to do “locally grounded” development, then, is to work through the priests, which is indeed what the twinning program directs U.S. twins to do.

At the same time, however, the priest is not always fully authorized to implement his vision for what needs to be done. Taking too much “discretion” with funding foments distrust, additional scrutiny of future spending, and sometimes a diminution of funding. There are real penalties for failing to “tow the line.” So, is the discourse of “locally-grounded” development in sync with the way twinning is actually practiced? In this case,

it is not but for two opposing reasons. First, priests are seemingly invested with too much authority; they are assumed to represent their community's interests without posing this as an empirical question. That is, how do we know the needs expressed by the priest are actually those that people within the community identify? Or, assuming that competing "needs" exist (as literatures critiquing participatory action approaches suggest, e.g., Gardner and Lewis 1996), whose needs get prioritized and why? Second, because priests are virtually the only medium for accessing the "local," when they are marginalized or excluded from decision-making, or penalized for decisions they do make, the local—even though problematic—becomes almost entirely disconnected from Haiti committee activities.

For example, the design of the school sponsorship project was under review in 2005, not because the priest—or other Haitians—suggested it, but because St. Robert sees that in the future, it will not be able to sustain the program as currently run. Right now, the sponsorship project supports students through high school, as well as a handful of university students. Assuming that more children than ever soon will be attending high school and college—since, presumably, more are now able to attend elementary school—costs for educating "advanced" students could soar. Where should St. Robert prioritize its funding? Some have suggested that funding minimum levels of education—assuring the opportunity for all children to go through sixth- or eighth-grade—should be a priority. As a result, the committee was going to propose a policy whereby they would no longer sponsor students in high school or university. In many ways the decision had already been made, again not because of needs voiced at the "local-level" but as a result of conversations and assessments made by committee members.

This highlights another important feature of St. Robert's development discourse and practice alluded to earlier: themselves recognizing development as fluid, mixed, and shifting, as well as difficult to practice from afar, St. Robert's Haiti committee wrestles with the best way to find out what is "really" happening on the ground in Haiti, to figure out how to make the projects run more smoothly, more efficiently than they currently are. They struggle with whether the priest should be fully trusted, merely given the benefit of the doubt, or held up for scrutiny. There is a real sense among some on the committee that they do not know what is happening in these projects, whether they are "successful" or not, whether they are well run or non-existent. In short, a question that has been hanging over the committee since I joined in 2001 is, "Where is our money going and is it making a difference?" It is a question unanswerable the way the program is currently structured. As one man said at a committee meeting,

With all the money we've spent, we're just taking a flying leap into the darkness. We never land on ground. Even you [Char] were there, and even you say "I don't know [what's going on in Haiti]" (Committee Meeting 3/31/05).

And, while Bill and Char do reside in Haiti for several months out of the year, their inability to speak Creole, relatively distant relationship with Father Yvens, and social isolation from the local community limit their ability to comment in-depth on the sponsored projects. Moreover, there is disagreement about what constitutes "making a difference." As one woman said in responding to my question of what happens when Our Lady asks for something that St. Robert does not want to provide. She replied,

[Our Lady] usually gets what they want from us. We have told them no [to certain things] now that this church bench thing came about....But, it doesn't stick because Cassie is so liberal. She says, "at least somebody is benefiting." No, it doesn't stick—it doesn't help them to help themselves.

The Haiti committee has attempted to have more people on the ground in Haiti and to integrate Bill and Char into the management of certain programs there. An American nun—fluent in Creole and stationed in Verrettes since 2001 as part of the United States Province of the Religious Sacred Heart —became an important contact for St. Robert. Sr. Judy Vollbrecht was enlisted to assist in facilitating the twinning in a variety of ways. At the most basic level, she sometimes would carry letters sent via email from St. Robert to Father Yvens. She also became deeply involved in administering the school sponsorship project, along with Bill and Char.

When Father Jean was in charge of Our Lady, student sponsorship money was said to be dispersed by him directly to recipients' families. "Because he knew everyone in town," having grown-up in the area, Father Jean was trusted by St. Robert to know whom the needy students were and whether the dispersed money was actually being used to send those children to school. As discussed earlier, when I was in Verrettes in 2002, I attempted to "trace" St. Robert's lists of sponsored children St. Robert had to the actual schools in the area. I had very little luck. The lists were outdated, inaccurate, or otherwise incomplete. In the one school where I was actually able to compare the current roster with my list of students supposedly sponsored at that school, I found little overlap. At another school, the principal refused to let me look at the official roster until Father Yvens gave his explicit approval, which never happened. Something clearly was amiss in the record-keeping among St. Robert, Our Lady, and the local schools.

St. Robert asked Bill and Char—along with Sr. Judy—to help "formalize" the student sponsorship project. The new "committee" in Haiti was to take pictures of each of the sponsored kids, collect report cards at the semester's end, and pay the schools

directly for tuition, rather than paying the families. The sponsorship project was reorganized to allow for more “surveillance” to ensure children were actually enrolling in and actively participating in school.

This new “on the ground” awareness did bring to light many issues no one on the committee had realized until then. For one, distributing school funding can be rather “dangerous.” Sr. Judy, and Bill and Char were targeted for intimidation as a result of having to turn away scholarship recipients. For example, disgruntled town residents who had been denied school funding protested by throwing rocks at Bill and Char’s house. Second, the time necessary to administer the project was enormous. The sheer volume of information generated (names, grades, payment history, pictures, sponsors’ information) was huge and required someone to organize and manage it. Someone also needed to go to the bank to arrange money transfers from the sponsorship coffers to the individual schools. Because students change schools with some frequency, maintaining up-to-date paperwork was on-going, as was arranging multiple payments to different schools for a student. Sometimes, books and uniforms were also supplied, which might necessitate a trip to Port-au-Prince, several hours’ drive from Verrettes. In short, the volume of work skyrocketed by shifting responsibility for the program from the priest and families to a “committee.”

In fact, the workload is so great that Sr. Judy could no longer continue helping with the sponsorship project. She has her own mission in Haiti, which is outside of the Our Lady – St. Robert twinning. Moreover, Bill and Char may not be able to continue with the project, as health issues have forced them to leave Haiti earlier than intended and may impact their ability to return. This leaves the Haiti committee in the position again

of deciding how to best run the student sponsorship project. Should Father Yvens be in charge? Should it run through the schools? Should they “hire” someone locally to coordinate the paperwork and payment? It seemed easier with Father Jean. “He knew the community. Father Yvens, he doesn’t know.” At this point in 2005, with the plan of scaling back upper-levels of education, St. Robert is unsure how to proceed.

St. Robert’s Haiti committee members have multiple ideas about what development means, and they have implemented a set of projects that they feel will help put their vision into practice. But, in the course of trying to “do” development from afar, they have run into a number of obstacles—most notably, the demands of working with a priest who they are not convinced is completely trustworthy—which have challenged some of their notions about development. In particular, real tension ensues around this “need” to locally-ground development. While an important ideal expressed in the narratives, locally grounded development is particularly difficult to achieve in the context of twinning. Not only is the hierarchy of the program such that Haitian priests are given authority to speak “for” their communities, but Haiti committee members in Michigan remain unconvinced about the priest’s priorities. This challenges the committee to reassess their visions for development and come up with a set of questions geared more toward “finding out” what is happening in the projects than in finding out what the “true” needs—and visions for meeting them—are in Haiti.

Twinning: Missionization versus Development?

As mentioned in Chapter One, when I first began studying twinning, I was perplexed by whether participants considered twinning to be about “development” or about “missionization.” What I have since discovered is that most people see twinning as

a hybrid of the two. When asked directly about whether they thought the St. Robert twinning attempted to develop Verrettes, only two people said no. The others felt that development was indeed a central feature of twinning. Similarly, when asked about whether they saw twinning as missionary work, only one said no. Two were more ambivalent, saying twinning was “somewhat” missionary work. This next section attempts to make sense of this “duality” by exploring the multiple ways that committee members give their Haiti experiences meaning, especially as related to missionary work.

Part of the challenge in categorizing twinning as missionary work is the fact that these are two Catholic parishes in partnership. Twinning does not focus on conversion, *per se*, because the people being targeted in Haiti are presumably already Christian-Catholics. In reality, of course, most Haitian Catholics blend Catholic and Vodou traditions in syncretic practice. But, this generally is not a point of focus for parishioners at St. Robert. No one on the Haiti committee mentioned subverting or weakening Vodou as a goal or purpose of twinning. Indeed, I explicitly asked all interviewees how they felt about Haitian Vodou, and I was surprised by the number of people who spoke of it dispassionately or alternately as rather intriguing. I expected to find more intolerance and negativity than I actually did. In conversations with Protestant missionaries in Haiti, I have heard time and again that Haiti is so poor *because* of Vodou, that Haiti’s tribulations are a direct punishment from God for Haitians’ blasphemy and worship of false idols. Yet, only a few people expressed this view, and only one put his understanding of Vodou in terms that explicit.

I think it is what is wrong with Haiti, in every aspect. Leviticus 26 says God wants to be worshipped by his people. He does not want to share. If they don’t do that, they will be punished. If they don’t change, they will be punished more. If they don’t

change again, they will be punished even more. He has punished [Haiti] more and more....I have to believe God is not happy with Haiti because of the Vodou.

This man was raised Lutheran, and his comparatively extreme view might stem from his “Protestant” background. While active in St. Robert’s Haiti Committee, he has never officially converted to Catholicism; he has attended Catholic parishes (and partaken in Eucharist) because his wife is Catholic, but he does not consider himself Catholic.

More commonly, committee members instead typically expressed a degree of ignorance about Vodou, and sometimes a desire to know more.

I don’t really have any feelings. It’s there, it exists, so what (Interview #11).

I don’t have a whole lot of knowledge of it. But, um, you know, I think it’s one of their cultural items that has come through the generations (Interview #21)

This is not to suggest that committee members warmly embrace Vodou or that they want to promote it. Rather, overall people simply do not pay much attention to it.

I don’t know much about it. I am more or less ambivalent about it. I’m not superstitious....To me, it’s sort of like a Haitian drycleaners. I didn’t have the opportunity to go into one, and I don’t care (Interview #6).

Or, alternately, they treat it as a quaint oddity that is more intriguing than threatening.

I don’t know much about it. I wanted to go to a witch doctor’s house and no one would let me (Interview #14).

In the middle of the night, I heard some chanting. Turns out, it was a Vodou ceremony. So, that was pretty cool (Interview #7).

The point here is that, even though most Haiti committee members say that they see twinning as a missionary activity, they do not see conversion as its goal. Vodou, while widely practiced in Haiti, is neither a focus for St. Robert’s twinning committee nor cause for much concern. Rather, in talking about missionization, most people emphasized the

“helping hand” aspects, as discussed in Chapter Four. In responding to the question of whether she considered twinning missionary work, one woman responded,

Yes, I suppose it is, although a lot of people when they do missionary work, it’s a form of proselytizing. That’s not nearly as important to me as attending to the people. I think when it comes down to it, doesn’t matter a hill of beans what religion you belong to. I don’t know if that’s [religion] where it’s at (Interview #10).

As one man speculated, for those most active in twinning, there is a romanticization of missionary work—not in religious terms—but through a notion that “I can do more than just give money. I can motivate people. I can take on relationships” (Interview #4). This was borne out in the interviews and committee meetings, as I discuss in Chapter Five. Some make explicit their feelings that twinning is unusual in bringing “beneficiaries” and “benefactors” together face to face. Participation allows for more than simply writing a check each month, though that is an option for people wanting that level of involvement. But, for those interested in “doing more” than giving money, twinning provides an avenue for travel, cross-cultural exchange, and hands-on “problem-solving” through project conception, design, implementation, and evaluation.

The quotes above raise another interesting feature: many seemed almost caught off guard by the question of twinning’s relationship to missionization, as if they had not really considered it before. One woman, for example, mused,

Oooh, I guess it would be classified as that. You just never know who you are going to touch when you’re in that type of situation. The parish that’s there is a Catholic parish, but um, in terms of “converting the heathens” or whatever, in terms of that kind of missionary, you never know what those outside the parish might see, what type of impact it might have (Interview #21).

And another,

TH: Do you think of twinning as missionary work?

Interviewee #11: Mmmhmmm [hesitantly].

TH: How so?

Interviewee #11: Taking, giving. Time and supplies. Helping people perhaps to get on their feet.

Indeed, while most people, when directly questioned, said twinning was a missionary activity, the religious aspects are rarely mentioned in interviews or discussed in committee meetings. Every two years St. Robert pays for catechism books for Our Lady, but directly promoting or supporting religious activities is a small component of the overall Haiti budget and programming. Despite proclamations, then, that twinning is, in fact, “missionary” in nature, the goals, discourses, and practices of St. Robert twinning tend to focus more explicitly on development in Verrettes.

This may reflect the reality that these are two Catholic parishes working together, so the “conversion factor” is missing, as discussed. It may be because Haitians—rooted in poverty—are constructed as “more spiritual” than Americans. Indeed, the idea of the “reverse mission” rests on assumptions about Haitians’ ability to teach Americans about spirituality. Or, it may be that lay Catholics are less inclined toward explicit missionary activities than other denominations working in Haiti, despite nudges given by the church and spelled out in NCCB documents. Indeed, Sr. Joan and Doug both hypothesized that there is a Catholic “obligation” to do missionary work on the one hand, but on the other acknowledged that Protestant churches tend to send more missionaries overseas. For Catholics, there is a sense that missionary activities are the domain of the clergy or of societies like Maryknoll, who have “expertise” in that sort of work. As Sr. Joan reflected, “Catholics aren’t big on that [missionary work.]” Seeming to affirm her analysis, another woman remarked:

I don't feel as a Catholic I'm an evangelist. I don't see Catholics taking on that role, so much. I don't see the twinning program with that as its goal, personally. I was never comfortable being referred to as missionary. People visiting Haiti would be referred to as missionaries. I never felt that (Interview #14).

Even Bill and Char—who some on the committee do classify as “missionaries” because of their commitment to living in Haiti—were at times hesitant about adopting the label themselves. Said Char,

We never really did [consider ourselves missionaries] because we have no real expertise in that, but people refer to us as missionaries. But, we ourselves, we didn't go to college for that. We have that vision of us as missionaries [that we'd like to be missionaries.] It's just that as missionaries, they go in and they spread the gospel, spread the word. They usually have training, they have people that are backing them. That's the norm. That's the tradition.

Importantly, it is partly on the basis of lack of training that Char and Bill are reluctant to adopt the missionary label. That is, they feel they somehow cannot fully claim the title “missionary” because they do not have the proper qualifications. It would seem the “cult of the expert”—this idea that training and credentials legitimize one to engage in certain activities as an expert—is alive and well when it comes to considering oneself to be a missionary. Perhaps this reflects the hierarchical nature of the Catholic Church more generally, where only in recent years have significant opportunities arisen for lay men and women to take on leadership roles in their parishes, though the priest remains at the peak of the parish pecking order. Importantly, however, in the more “secular” domain of development, the cult of the expert has been thoroughly demystified, as is discussed in prior chapters and will be explored more fully the following chapter. Development can and is designed, carried out, and evaluated by lay men and women, who are able to draw

on their experiences living in a “developed” nation to cast themselves as development “experts.”

As mentioned earlier, travels to Haiti by committee participants are called “reverse missions” because they are intended to provide opportunities for spiritual renewal, growth, and learning for Americans traveling to Haiti, rather than for the conversion or change of Haitians. That is, the logic of twinning is explicitly about gaining knowledge or insight from Haitians, rather than attempting to convey those things to them. In practice, we have seen this is not always the case, of course; a central feature of St. Robert’s twinning is its attempts to enlighten Haitians and bring about a change in mentality, “vision,” and attitude via education. Notably, St. Robert has moved further away from the reverse mission model in other ways, too, specifically regarding the purpose and practice of travel.

As discussed in Chapter One, travel to Haiti is typically an integral feature of twinning, particularly as newly twinned parishes are beginning to “get to know” one another. For white, middle-class Americans, travel to Haiti often challenges their ways of thinking, calls into question U.S. materialism and over-consumption, and offers alternate models for “being” in the world. PTPA actively promotes such transformation by assisting with travel plans and strongly encouraging these face-to-face experiences on Haitian soil. First-time travelers often visit orphanages, homes for the sick and dying, and other places where Haiti’s most vulnerable populations—and especially its children—are clustered together and cared for, chiefly by foreigners. These are moments for parishioners to “be the hands and feet” of Jesus Christ, to care for the sick and weak,

to tend to the downtrodden. And, they are often profoundly moving experiences for committee members, many of whom spoke at length about their time spent in Haiti.

We worked in an orphanage, run by sisters. Just to see these rooms of cribs—much smaller, maybe two-thirds the size of a U.S. crib, made of metal—end to end and all these babies. Some of them reach their arms out to you. We tried to hold them for a little bit. Some of them were sick, with different tubes, oxygen, really snotty noses. We wore rubber gloves when diapering them because of the huge AIDS situation going on. It was really neat helping out with these little babies. They're precious, they just cling to you. In another part of orphanage, they have older kids, maybe two to eight years old. They gather around you and cling to you. If you pick one up, the others would try pushing them away so they could get up. They were pushing, trying to get closer to human contact than others. It's not so much about the attention, but they're seeking human contact. They get it there [from the sisters at the orphanage], but there is not enough to go around (Interview #7).

And, it is from these trips that committee members relate their participation in twinning to a larger vision of how to be a good Catholic, often by referencing the work of Mother Theresa.

TH: Who are your heroes in the Catholic faith?

Interviewee #9: I guess I would say Mother Theresa; it was a strength issue. She was extremely strong, very confident in her own skin. She was a calming influence, like the Sisters of Charity we visited in Haiti, just her insight, her vision. She required that all the sisters speak English, fluently. It made it very easy to go anywhere. The orphanage [we visited in Haiti] was rather chaotic when we went in there, but the sisters were the picture of calm. It was really, um, you could feel the grace.

In talking about her travels to Haiti, another woman mentioned,

Unless you visit a country like that, you don't have a clue. I guess, I recently I heard a quote from Mother Theresa about how not to be overwhelmed by that kind of atmosphere....That's exactly how I approached going into an orphanage. There were kids from infancy to early childhood, and they are so starved for attention and love. You only have two arms, that's all you can handle. You can't do more than that. If a child is starved for touch, that's the one I'm holding (Interview #3).

As in the larger projects, these are personal experiences, focused on touching individual lives, or the lives of those in small communities (e.g., orphanages, hospitals). The focus is not on the structural features necessitating women give up their babies for adoption or leave them on hospital door-steps so that they might receive desperately needed medical care. Rather, the idea of the “starfish,” the one individual whose life might be touched or bettered by the work of the committee member, again predominates.

To return to the point introduced earlier, the reverse mission model at St. Robert has abated in recent years, however. Given that few new people come aboard the committee these days, there is less need to introduce members to the “reality” of Haiti. Many of those now traveling to Haiti have participated in these types of “reverse mission” experiences in previous trips and so are familiar with their power. But, more importantly, the nature of the St. Robert – Our Lady twinning has shifted to focus more on project administration and evaluation. That is, when committee members travel to Haiti now, it is more often to check up on what is happening in their sponsored projects than to learn more about Haiti and Haitians.

One reason for this change is attributable to the tense relationship St. Robert has with Father Yvens in Haiti. Father Yvens is less inclined to invite groups down to Haiti, telling the committee he feels somewhat compromised by their visits.

Instead of sending a group of non-specialized people [to Haiti], we work with people who’ve been there before, specialists. Father Yvens does not encourage us to send groups. He’s afraid people will try to extort money from him after we leave. The openness of the past—the ignorance of what was going on [people pressuring the priest after we left]—that has changed (Interview #1).

But, a second reason for the change in orientation stems from critiques about the value of reverse missions. Some view them more as tours than spiritual encounters, and given the

burden such tours place on hosts in Haiti, have suggested that St. Robert reform its travel priorities and purpose. They argue that rather than being cultural tours or spiritual missions, trips to Haiti should be about quick program evaluation, “getting in and getting out” with just a few people, over a few days.

With a [“regular”] mission trip, all eight people are building a house, all eight people working. The part I didn’t like [about the reverse mission] is that it was too much of a tour. When I first got involved, I didn’t feel like we needed to send eight people over to tour Haiti. [I thought we should do shorter, smaller, more focused trips.] I brought it back to the Haiti committee, and they said okay. I understand, not every person has my knowledge in construction, not everyone has Cassie’s ability to lead. But, Haiti is not a freak show. We shouldn’t be going there just to gawk. So, I brought those concerns back. Cassie reacted favorably, as did the rest of committee. Am I wrong? Maybe. But, my trips with two to three people are the best. I don’t think we need to bother them, don’t need to camp out for a week, unless there’s a reason for it....Your new people on the committee can tag along to see what they can do. But, it’s just not good to take eight to ten people at a time.

These thoughts were echoed by others, who felt traditional reverse missions did not provide them an opportunity to “do” anything. As reverse missionaries, travelers get the chance to learn on these trips rather than actually propose and enact solutions. And, for a program that is established and fairly rigidly focused, as is St. Robert’s, the reverse mission format can be understood as an inefficient use of time and resources. So, in recent years, St. Robert has been sending smaller groups of two to three people, who travel directly to Verrettes—rather than spending a few days in Port-au-Prince’s orphanages and hospitals—to check out their sponsored projects, meet with the relevant “players” in Haiti (priests, committee members), to get reports, go over the accounting ledgers, assess any current requests for assistance (e.g., does the church roof really need repair?), and then depart for Michigan.

The practice of St. Robert's twinning, then, diverges a bit from its discourse. While the missionary aspects are widely agreed to be integral to the twinning, they are also sidelined in pursuit of efficiency and effectiveness. With a focus on meeting material needs in Haiti through the various projects they implemented, St. Robert's Haiti committee ultimately prioritizes development over (reverse) missionization. This might be explained, in part, by participants' lack of need to "convert" Haitians to Catholicism; they assume they are already working with highly devoted Catholics. So, there is no overriding impulse to evangelize, as I have seen in other (Protestant) programs.

At the same time, the "cult of the expert" remains. While lay men and women are taking on ever more prominent roles in their parishes, the Catholic parish is still very hierarchical, with the priest at the top. Perhaps parishioners do not feel it is their role to engage in direct missionization; that is better left to the "experts," to clergy and societies like Maryknoll. While they cannot offer Haitians religious insight, committee members do have "expertise" on living materially sufficient, economically successful lives. As such, perhaps they feel they can provide Haitians opportunities for material enrichment, particularly by providing educational opportunities. A question that emerges is, are Haitians able and willing to actually implement projects according to the vision established in Michigan? Attempting to answer this question dominates St. Robert's travel agenda, more so than the "reverse mission" motivation of the past.

Conclusion

For St. Robert's Haiti committee, development primarily means meeting basic needs in Haiti, being sensitive to "local" conditions, and offering people the opportunity to better themselves—and their chances for "success"—via education. Discourses of

“developing people” and locally-grounding development are unevenly practiced, however. Accessing and assessing the “local” are particularly difficult for committee members, since none of them speaks Creole. Moreover, the Haitian priest’s position as a mediator between his parish and that of its American twin sometimes becomes an obstacle. For example, when communications between the priest and Haiti committee broke down, so did the opportunity for exchange—both in terms of travel and contact. Of course, even when the Haiti committee and priest had a good working relationship, the extent to which the priest was able to truly capture the diverse “needs” of his congregation remains a question.

The discourses and practices characterizing St. Robert’s development efforts can be related, in part, to the very structure of twinning, which at once diminishes the cultural distance between two parishes while also reinforcing the perception of differences between them. Indeed, St. Robert committee members construct a duality wherein Haitians are at once to be admired for avoiding U.S. “over-development,” while also critiqued for their inability to envision how to create a better, more materially secure future. This vision, committee members assume, will be planted and nurtured by resources from outside Haiti, from those like themselves who are able to fund educational initiatives. So, while committee members suggest development must be rooted in the particulars of Haiti, they simultaneously suggest that Haitians—at present—lack the capacity to create their own visions for how to proceed. Crafting development, then, is a matter of equipping individuals with the proper tools to build their own “self-sufficiency” rather than on changing the structural forces that keep most Haitians marginalized and impoverished.

Most on the committee believe that twinning is about both development and missionization in Haiti. But, most also clarify that missionary work to them does not mean religious conversion of Haitians. Rather, missionary work is about giving a “helping hand” to Haitians, sharing resources with them, giving them a chance for a better life. The religious aspects of twinning tend to be overshadowed, then, by the developmental facets. Committee efficiency and project evaluation have become central features of travel to Haiti, rather than “reverse missions” whereby parishioners have the opportunity to be the “hands and feet of Jesus Christ.”

CHAPTER SIX: DEVELOPMENT AND ITS DISCONTENTS

As international development becomes increasingly privatized, “non-professionals”—like those active in parish twinning—have increasing space to design and deliver development projects. In Chapter Six I consider the extent to which formal and lay development are similar to and different from one another. The analysis focuses on three related questions. First, in what ways do lay and professional initiatives overlap, converge, and / or diverge from one another? Second, what is the relationship between the entrenched, hegemonic discourses that both post-structuralists and anthropology of development scholars agree exist—discourses that are institutionalized and implemented by development “experts”—and the discourses and practices of those who stand “outside” the “development machine”? Third, is twinning “development as usual,” alternative development, counter-development, or something else?

The previous chapter explored the various ways development is imagined and implemented by those active in St. Robert’s Haiti committee. Focusing on promoting education and locally-grounded development in Haiti, committee members regularly encounter a host of problems and concerns at once both typical of more conventional initiatives and also particular to their unique circumstances as “equal partners” in the development process. By considering the trends, missteps, and concerns of conventional initiatives, this next section attempts to situate lay development within a broader framework in order to assess the extent to which lay and professional approaches relate to one another.

Framing Human Development

Twinning at St. Robert in many ways echoes what in “conventional” development is considered a “human development” approach. The United Nations’ Human Development Report (UNDP) defines human development as a process of enlarging people’s “choices,” especially those allowing people to lead long and healthy lives, to acquire knowledge, and to have access to resources needed for a decent standard of living. Such basic choices are deemed foundations for further opportunities.

Through its human development index (HDI), UNDP measures the extent to which countries succeed or fail at giving their peoples such choices. HDI measures literacy rates, life expectancy, access to potable water, and other features to compare and rank “human development” among the world’s countries. In the 2004 report, Haiti is ranked 153rd out of 177 countries—an indication of its comparatively “poor” human development (UNDP 2004). While those on the St. Robert Haiti committee do not reference the HDI or UNDP, they do frequently refer to Haiti as “the poorest country in the Western hemisphere,” a stylized fact found throughout the twinning promotional materials.

In literature drawn and distributed by both PTPA and HOP, Haiti’s current “status” at the bottom end of development scales is highlighted. For example, a “Facts about Haiti” sheet distributed by HOP reads,

Haiti faces a difficult challenge of restoring a devastated economy. The island has been robbed of most of their [sic] natural resources. They are at 97 percent deforestation, and 85 percent illiteracy. There is no medical care for the masses, and only 13 percent of Haiti has a source of clean drinking water. All this has crippled Haiti, which is now the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere (HOP n.d.).

Similarly, PTPA in its own “Facts about Haiti” sheet highlights Haiti’s high infant mortality rate, low life expectancy, high levels of illiteracy and unemployment, and low annual incomes. Drawing from these “facts,” St. Robert committee members prioritize a number of concerns raised by UNDP in its reports: education, health, water-supply, and the like.

In conventional development channels, these concerns evolved out of the notion of meeting “basic needs,” an approach particularly popular in the 1970s. Under a basic needs strategy, development assistance is supposed to be targeted directly to the poor, rather than “trickling down” from above or through the state (Peet and Hartwick 1999). While the basic needs approach does not directly link to a set of proscriptive measures, it does suggest three primary areas of concern: 1) Individuals’ and families’ need for food, shelter, clothes, and other necessities of daily life; 2) Access to public services, like potable water, sanitation, health, and education; 3) Ability to participate and have voice in local and national politics (Martinussen 1997:299; Moser 1993).

Both the basic needs approach and its more recent incarnation as human development emphasize the elimination of poverty as a moral imperative, as a “mission” to be undertaken by the global north on behalf of the south. The mission is most recently expressed by the UN in terms of its “Millennium Development Goals,” which all UN member nations have pledged to meet by 2015 and include such things as eliminating hunger and poverty, achieving universal primary education and the like (UN 2005).³⁰ Importantly, this mission “justifies interventions into the countries of the

³⁰ There are eight UN Millennium Development Goals. They are: 1) Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; 2) Achieve universal primary education; 3) Promote gender equality and empower women; 4) Reduce child mortality; 5) Improve maternal health; 6) Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases; 7) Ensure environmental sustainability; 8) Develop a global partnership for development (UN 2005)

south, if necessary bypassing...local governments” through appeals based on “solidarity with the poor” (Rist 1997:164) and appeals to the supposedly more “efficient” channeling of resources directly to beneficiaries rather than through the state (see Fisher 1997). Clearly, this reverberates with the orientation of twinning at St. Robert, as well as twinning more broadly, where explicit reference is made to standing in solidarity with Haiti’s poor and powerless, and where the notion of person-to-person outreach is central. As indicated earlier, several members on the Haiti committee at St. Robert were explicit that their participation in twinning was more important than other types of “charity” because it puts them into direct contact with those they are helping and both parties (in theory) “benefit” from the relationship. Moreover, as twinning promotional literature repeatedly states, “One hundred percent of every donation goes directly to the Haitian parish or project. There is no middleman and no bureaucracy” (PTPA n.d.:4).

Indeed, both basic needs approaches and parish twinning are skeptical of “national bourgeoisies,” who as Rist (1997:165) says, are seen “either as making off with the fruits of ‘development’ or refusing to comply with funders’ injunctions.” Not only does twinning attempt to skirt these national interests, it simultaneously disparages them as corrupt and in need of reformation. Haiti’s elites have, in fact, been the targets of numerous scholarly and popular criticisms (Farmer 1994; Maternowska 1996; Bell 2001), which are simplified but amplified in twinning networks. As striking as the poverty is to many of the white middle-class travelers to Haiti, the visible inequality between Haiti’s rich and poor can be even more shocking. And, importantly, committee members tightly link elite interests with government failure in Haiti.

Good Government Requires Throwing ‘Aristotle’ Out

Lack of “good governance” in Haiti is central to most committee members’ explanations for its poverty. Similarly, as discussed in Chapter Three, it is very much in vogue in current conventional development discourse to blame the failures of development on the failures of states to properly implement it (e.g., World Bank 1998; Van de Walle 2001; Evans 1992; Wade 1985). Over the past fifty years, the “conventional wisdom” on what roles states should play in developing their economies has waxed and waned. In the 1950s and ‘60s, states were expected to be important actors in accelerating industrialization, modernizing agriculture, and providing infrastructure for urban areas; by the late 1970s and ‘80s, states were relegated to supporting roles, such as defending property rights; by the late 1980s and through the 2000s, states are again considered important players, but by maintaining “good institutions” that support open markets, free trade, and democracy (Evans 1992; Van de Walle 2001). That is, the current conceptualization conceives of states as best when they are “hands off” but with “good” institutions in place that allow them to be such.

Indeed, by scrutinizing development’s genealogy, patterns to “explain” the failures of development are clear: development has been too focused on large-scale infrastructure building versus basic needs; development has ignored women and the importance of gender (Boserup 1970); development has failed to include “local participation” (Chambers 1997). As Jan Knippers Black (1999:221) maintains, “Development in theory and practice is a slave to fashion.” Today’s currently fashionable explanation eventually gives way to tomorrow’s successor. In our current moment, the fashion is to blame development’s past failures on funders’ historical lack

of concern with “government.” That is, development was supposed to be an apolitical exercise remedying technical problems of development and underdevelopment. As such, it did not concern itself with promoting the “policy environments” necessary for development to actually work. That, say those currently at the fore of conventional initiatives, is why development has failed—bad governments have been subsidized through development aid, allowing them to live beyond their means, pocket monies intended for the poor, and undermine grassroots attempts at development. In order for development to work, governments need to create “good” environments with transparency, open markets, and privatization, as discussed in Chapter Three.

This focus on “good governance” is a key factor that St. Robert’s Haiti committee twinning participants call upon to explain why Haiti is so poor.

I saw a documentary on when the Americans occupied Haiti during Duvalier’s time [sic].³¹ They did good things, like put in roads. But, a firm government wasn’t set up after they left. And since then, Haiti’s been in limbo. They don’t have the leadership to continue, to put in roads, to build sewers and water lines (Interview #4).

Similarly, in response to the question, “Why do you think Haiti is so poor?”

several people mentioned the problems of bad government.

I would like to believe it was the government suppressing their desires to become self-sufficient. I think their leadership hasn’t always been for the people, by the people. [sighs]. I guess it’s a mental control....I think the government itself suppresses the people and doesn’t allow for their advancement. Their leadership has been lousy, I think. Whatever was good for the leadership, suppressed people (Interview #11).

31 The U.S. occupation of Haiti, 1915-1934, has been criticized as exceptionally brutal period in Haiti’s history. The U.S. instituted marshal law, censored newspapers, favored light-skinned elites for key administrative positions, and rewrote Haiti’s constitution to allow for foreign ownership of land. The “U.S. built” roads were actually constructed using *corvée* labor extracted from Haiti’s peasantry. (See Schmidt 1995.)

I think a lot of it has to do with governments that are taking money and not giving it back to where it needs to be (Interview #21).

They lack leadership at the government level, they lack integrity at government level, and the Haitian population doesn't have an education (Interview #12).

As Carolyn Nordstrom (2004) notes, the power of the state stems from its ability to convince people of its necessity, of its inevitability. If citizens buy into the notion that the state is the “civilizing force” that keeps their barbarian, brutish tendencies in check, the state becomes legitimized and its authority accepted. Many of those on the Haiti committee likewise invest in myths about the “primacy of the state” to craft a society that keeps Haitians’ “beast[s] as tamed as possible” (Nordstrom 2004:178). Accordingly, some extend the notion of “state failure” in Haiti to explain the “savagery” of Haiti’s citizens. In other words, because the state is dysfunctional—it does not have “visionaries and the gifted” necessary to lead the country (Nordstrom 2004:178)—the state cannot properly “civilize” Haitians—who are then mob-like, violent, unpredictable, illiterate, and diseased.

TH: What wishes or aspirations or dreams do you have for Haiti?

Interviewee #1: So many things. At a minimum, to be able to feed their people and to have enough police force to protect people in jail from lynch mobs. They have police, but they don't know how to do that [protect people].

TH: In what ways would you like Haiti to be more like the U.S.?

Interview #16: Clean drinking water, um, better government, laws—along with that would be more police officers to enforce it, more army to enforce it, an army to ensure protection for people.

Ironically, the abuse of the peasantry by the state has risen in proportion to the Haitian state’s centralization and consolidation. Historically, the state has been better able to manage—and terrorize—its population since the U.S. occupation of Haiti, 1915-34

(Schmidt 1995), which formalized and bureaucratized the state's operations in Port-au-Prince, as well as created what was to become the modern Haitian army (see Hefferan 1998). Haiti's peasantry has created its own institutions, procedures, and systems of justice largely outside of state channels precisely to avoid the humiliation, degradation, and vulnerability they experience in encounters with the state (e.g., see Smith 2001).

There is a duality, then, in the way that the Haitian state is imagined by some on St. Robert's Haiti committee. On the one hand, the state is acknowledged as a source of corruption and repression, and perhaps the primary reason for Haiti's poverty. On the other hand, the state is seen to need strengthening in order to keep in line the otherwise untamed hordes of savages who threaten (or outright undermine) civilization in Haiti.

When asked to clarify the "type" of state they imagine or wish for Haiti, committee members often drew on "liberal" conceptualizations of the state, reflecting their white middle-class American positions. Not surprisingly, their conceptualizations overlap with those currently in vogue in formal development channels, as well. In responding to the question, "What does 'good government' mean to you?" interviewees focused on personal freedoms—like those contained in the U.S. Bill of Rights—property rights, democracy, trade, even privatization. For example,

Good government provides an environment where an economy can flourish, where an individual's rights are respected. If you don't have a good government, people can't flourish, an economy can't flourish. When you don't have personal rights, when you don't have an economy, when you do not have integrity, you have anarchy. And, that's what they have in Haiti (Interview #12).

Opportunities for people, laws, safety, infrastructure, trade. There's nothing like that in Haiti, it seems like (Interview #14).

Democratic government, major privatization, and regular law and order, not vigilante—which is more disorganized.... You need to get, you need

to have armies and police in governmental hands. No private police, no private armies (Interview #20).

I also asked committee members what they thought the role of the U.S. government should be in promoting development in Haiti. Opinion varied, with some asserting that the government has no role in the affairs of other countries and others suggesting the U.S. government needed not just to provide aid to Haiti but to initiate an outright overhaul of the Haitian government. Following on the heels of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide's controversial exit from Haiti in March 2004 (see Chomsky et al. 2004), one man speculated on how the U.S. could help steer Haiti out of poverty.

[The U.S. should] throw Aristotle [sic] out, which they've done. Then the U.S. can put in a government that will, in fact, that can be trusted to be good stewards of the money that will be given to rebuild that nation and economy (Interview #12).

The "proper" role for states in promoting the development of their economies is a key issue for conventional development initiatives. It is also a preoccupation of those active in St. Robert's Haiti twinning. Yet, while both groups focus on the need for good policy environments—which include things like secure property rights, privatization, trade, institutional transparency, and personal freedoms—only conventional initiatives are penalizing those nations failing to conform to the good governance definitions. In the case of Haiti, hundreds of millions of dollars in official development aid were withheld in response to what have been termed 2000's "fraudulent elections" (Robinson 2004; Farmer et al. 2003). In a dispute arising from the formula used to calculate the winners of seven senate seats, the U.S. and others—including the World Bank and International Monetary Fund—alleged vote rigging in Haiti and, siding with anti-Aristide activists, demanded that the election be rerun. Labeled by some a "financial

embargo,” the response to perceived governmental corruption was to withhold official development aid and loans to the Government of Haiti (Robinson 2004). In contrast, while those active in the twinning program acknowledge—indeed blame—the failures of government to promote democracy and development in Haiti, they also suggest that they are there to care for Haiti’s citizens in the absence of the state’s capacity or willingness to do so. Their work “fills the gap” in meeting perceived critical needs in Haiti. When asked if they could imagine a time when the twinning program would no longer be necessary, several interviewees commented they could envision the end of twinning, only *after* the government was reformed.

I would guess if either the government was stable enough that the government could assist people or that the community was self-sustaining, with people not going hungry and able to go to school (Interview #21).

I think if Haiti lost its Third World status, and the country developed a political system, gave basic human rights to people, freedoms, if the education were developed so people got an education, could do more for themselves. I guess then, twinning wouldn’t be necessary (Interview #13).

Thus, while both conventional and lay initiatives draw on “good governance” discourses to explain poverty and the failure of development, conventional initiatives respond by withdrawing from and punishing states with “bad policy” environments, while lay initiatives like twinning step in and attempt to make-up for the state’s deficiencies.

“Troubles” with Development

While a variety of “barriers” have forestalled development, according to both conventional and lay theorists and practitioners, so too have a number of “troubles” beset those attempting to implement development. In this next section, I explore some

of the “challenges” St. Robert has faced as it works for Haitian development and consider whether these are particular to St. Robert or symptomatic of development more generally.

As both concept and practice, development was “created” in and by the global north on behalf of the south. As such, much of its framework reflects Western, Enlightenment thinking, with a focus on science, rationality, Truth. And, despite rhetoric on the importance of “participation” and locally-generating development, the reality is that only certain locally-based practices are deemed “acceptable.” Corruption is not among these; rather, corruption is defined in negative terms (as the absence of impersonal bureaucracy, objectivity, professionalism) and its presence attributed to the failures or flaws of the systems (and people) in which it occurs.

Development professionals have long been preoccupied with understanding and explaining corruption, with the goal of eliminating it. Whether characterized as a “primitive” or transitional moment in the evolution of state bureaucracy (Myrdal 1968) or as “rooted” in a traditional culture (Hayden 1983) that allows friends, family, and others to call upon “bureaucrats” for favors, corruption generally is defined, assessed, and measured in normative Western terms. Corruption is framed as a problem to be overcome. And, indeed, those working within state bureaucracies oftentimes *are* able to capture official development aid intended for the poor and powerless. Corruption is a complex phenomenon that conventional development keeps at the fore of its concerns.

St. Robert also has experienced the “troubles” of corruption. While emphasizing the “no middleman” nature of twinning, the reality is that many U.S. parishes, including St. Robert, have experienced the challenges of working through

middlemen. For example, many parishes send “sea containers” of goods to Haiti. School supplies, bikes, sewing machines, medicines—the list of items sent from the U.S. to Haiti is lengthy. And, most containers do not arrive to their Haitian parish twins completely intact. Usually, at least some—and occasionally most—of the goods have been “stolen” along the way. While sitting on the docks for months awaiting clearance from customs, the containers are thought to be accessible both to corrupt custom workers, as well as people “off the streets.” I have heard of tool boxes intended for trade school graduates, sewing machines, medical equipment, bikes, and the like going missing from the containers, and this has been a real point of frustration for those on St. Robert’s Haiti committee.

You’d like to do something, but it’s very hard because a lot of stuff that is sent has to go through the government. There’s so much graft, that the stuff you send doesn’t get to where it needs to go. It’s frustrating to try to do very much for these people, because so many people are willing to take away what they have. That’s just the nature of human beings, I guess....The people in power have lot more to say than people not in power (Interview #13).

Some have suggested these problems of “graft” and corruption are just a cost of “doing business” in Haiti and so need to be factored in as such. By paying “gratuities” and enrolling key players within the twinning network, one local businessman in another Grand Rapids parish has made getting intact sea containers to Haiti “an art.” And, Doug now helps coordinate sea container shipments from Grand Rapids to Haiti through this man, rather than through PTPA.

Bruce has gotten it down to an art. He can get containers in and out in two months. While PTPA was sending them, they would just be opened up on streets. It’s much more organized now than what the national end is doing.

Interestingly, despite having access to this new “streamlined” import system, St. Robert has not shipped any containers through Bruce. There seems to be some hesitation about the best way to proceed with containers, perhaps because committee members are still smarting from the loss of so much equipment from the last shipment made. At any rate, like development professionals more broadly, committee members at St. Robert have felt frustrated by what they see as a disruption in the chain linking them to their intended beneficiaries. The system is currently constructed as problematic and in need of transformation.

St. Robert committee members have been frustrated by other aspects of the twinning, as well. As discussed in prior chapters, the relationship between the committee and the current head of Our Lady, Father Yvens, has been strained, not in the least because of Father Yvens perceived poor accounting of how he is spending twinning funds. While “the problem with the church pews” described earlier escalated the tension between the two parishes, Father Yvens’ behavior since then has been considered somewhat “strange” and sometimes “suspicious.”

In conventional development endeavors, formal accounting is a necessary and non-negotiable condition of receiving development aid. The recipients of that aid—or, at least those tasked with delivering the aid—are required to provide an accounting of how funds have been used. Barring such accountability, aid will not be dispersed.

In the context of twinning, these lines are less clear. Again, stemming from the idea that two parishes are coming together in “equal partnership” with one another, the donor parish is not supposed to be in a more powerful position than the recipient parish. As seen earlier, this ideal unevenly translates into practice. Nonetheless, this voiced ideal

does set some parameters on how demanding some St. Robert committee members feel they can be. In talking about the accounting reports coming from Haiti, one woman remarked:

We're supposed to get accounting every six months; they do it when they feel like it. And, it's down to the penny, so you know [the reports are not completely accurate] (Interview #8).

This sense that Father Yvens makes an accounting of twinning funds only when he “feels like it” has been a cause for tension among those on the committee, some of whom feel they should demand more rigorous accounting before additional funds are dispersed, and others who feel that funds should continue to flow to Haiti despite what is considered shoddy and intermittent accounting. In talking about “not getting very much information from Father Yvens”—specifically regarding the diminution of the food project, where students were being fed only two to three days a week rather than four—at one committee meeting, the following exchange took place:

Committee member #1: The only way to get accountability is to withhold the money. It gets me in my belly thinking of children going hungry.

Committee member #2: It's the Haitian tradition—everything runs through the priest. We've had more success with the microloan committee.

Committee member #3: It's contrary to Haitian culture [to skirt the priest's authority]. The priest is second to God.

Committee member #1: Father does not like being in that parish.

Committee member #4: If we want to get the money into the food program, [we have to set up the program differently].

Committee member #2: Father would be insulted. He likes to control the money.

Committee member #4: But, the money's not being used for what it's supposed to be. Maybe we need to find an alternative.

Committee member #2: He's proud of the system he's worked out....

Committee member #5: Maybe we could ask [the Bishop of Gonaives] for a transfer [for Father Yvens?]

Committee member #6: We can't ask that. How would it look if someone from the outside asked for Father Lou's [St. Robert's head pastor] removal?

Committee member #5: Jean [former head pastor of Our Lady] sees the Bishop daily....

There were calls later in the meeting for sending only a small portion of the \$20,000 allotted for the food project, sending the full amount but warning that receipts really were needed, and sending two months worth—and holding the remainder of the funds pending receipts. Some suggested Father Yvens show some “evidence” that food was really being purchased and prepared for the students. “Show us some pictures, some evidence of them eating” suggested one committee member.

After deciding to send a portion the \$20,000 allotted for the food project, the committee proceeded to another contentious topic: the “doubling up” of twins by Our Lady. As one woman reported, “Father Yvens wrote to Theresa Patterson two summers ago, asking to be twinned, thinking we wouldn't find out about it.” While Theresa reportedly declined to assign him another twin, Father Yvens was able to find his own supplemental twin in a Baltimore parish. This information came through “secret sources” rather than Father Yvens himself. Moreover, the Baltimore parish—aside from the head of its Haiti committee—is unaware of St. Robert's involvement with Our Lady. And, the head of that committee does not want St. Robert “to tell” the larger Baltimore parish of the double twinning.

Since learning about the duplicate twinning, St. Robert has attempted to work with the head of the Baltimore committee, though with little success. Labeling him “cagey,” one woman on the Haiti committee expressed her confusion about the secrecy surrounding his twinning. Said another, “If I were a member of the Baltimore parish, I’d want to know [about us here at St. Robert]!” St. Robert’s Haiti committee has decided against contacting the Baltimore parish—opting instead to continue working only with its committee head—so as to not disrupt the financial flows Father Yvens is receiving from Baltimore.

Despite these revelations about the lack of accounting, the scarcity in the food project, and the “double-dipping” into twinning funds, one woman at the meeting returned to the earlier debate about how much money to send Father Yvens for the food project.

Committee member #2: I’d like to send the larger amount.

In frustrated and irritated tone, another responded,

Committee member #1: How often do we have to get kicked in the head? We’re throwing money down a pit while the kids still aren’t eating!

These types of interactions are typical of twinning meetings, where there are no clear answers to the many questions raised by committee members. Indeed, almost a year after the committee meeting just detailed, another meeting hosted the following exchange.

Father: My concern is accountability.

Committee member #1: I don’t know that we’ll ever get an accounting. We have two different geographies, cultures, languages.

Father: I said accountability, not accounting.

Committee member #2: Why, there's always overhead. We're trying to get the money directly to the people. On the other hand, we could pay someone \$30,000 year to live there, to have a person on the spot [to let us know what's really going on.]

Committee member#3: Every group that goes down is both frustrated and impressed with what they find.

Committee member# 1: Do we really not trust the parish and the priest? We give them the money—do we need to monitor how it's spent?

As the above exchanges demonstrate, there is no consensus on what accountability might be or whether it is really necessary. Despite proclamations that “we control the finances, so they have to jump through the hoops,” as one woman commented to me in another context, the reality is that there is little agreement on what those hoops should look like and who precisely should do the jumping. As of 2005, Father Yvens had managed to skirt being held to much scrutiny. Despite the displeasure and disapproval those most active on the Haiti committee feel for Father Yvens, they continue to support him financially.

Would the “fungibility” of St. Robert's aid be considered “corruption” in conventional development circles? Would Father Yvens' accounting sheets—balanced to the penny as they are—be eyed suspiciously? Would aid continue to flow to Our Lady, even when duplicate projects and funding from other sources were likely possibilities? The debates that continually occur at committee meetings—including concerns about accountability—are in many ways distinctive to this type of development initiative. Implored to respect, trust, and collaborate with its twin in Haiti, St. Robert's committee faces numerous challenges that have no easy solutions. So, while both conventional and lay initiatives worry about the presence and effects of

corruption on projects and beneficiaries, only twinning agonizes over how to handle them. Like the failures of the Haitian state, the perceived failures of the local leadership do not result in marginalization or exclusion from aid regimes in twinning. They cause tension among those on the Haiti committee, but aid continues to flow as members attempt to forge agreeable solutions.

“Hegemonic Discourse” and Twinning

As examined in Chapter Three, many post-structuralist scholars largely agree that a hegemonic development discourse exists:³² one preoccupied with (abnormal) poverty and its elimination via the rational, technological application of (Western) scientific knowledge (Escobar 1995). The discourse allows certain development “professionals,” those with specialized and expert knowledge, to “set the rules for the game,” to define what is rational and possible, and, in the process, it allows those in the global north to justify interventions into the south. Moreover, despite being “experts,” development professionals often have an incomplete—sometimes wildly inaccurate—understanding of the historical and political contexts in which they work and the people they are endeavoring “to develop” (Ferguson 1994).

This dissertation is an exploration of development as it is conceived of, designed, and implemented by those outside formal development agencies—whether state-sponsored or non-governmental—those who generally would not be considered “development experts” and who may or may not be constrained by a hegemonic discourse. One question this dissertation attempts to answer is, what is the relationship

32 There is disagreement, of course, about the extent to which such a discourse is monolithic and impervious to challenge or change.

between the entrenched hegemonic discourses characterizing “conventional” development initiatives and those of lay development?

To consider the question here, I will break it down into a couple of statements addressing the concerns many scholars have raised regarding hegemonic development discourses. I evaluate these statements in terms of their applicability to parish twinning.

Development Depoliticizes Poverty

Some have argued that development is, in many ways, a sleight of hand that magically refocuses attention away from the structural features undergirding global poverty and instead focuses it on “technical” features that can be quantified, measured, and evaluated (Ferguson 1994; Escobar 1995). Poverty exists because something is lacking—or abnormal—about the nation, society, or group being labeled “poor.” Rather than addressing issues of power and domination, the global division of wealth, structural inequality, and the like, development instead treats poverty as a technical problem that can be resolved through certain “interventions,” such as increasing industrialization, promoting trade, enhancing agricultural efficiency, reducing disease, and building roads.

Development is critiqued, then, for not focusing on the structures and processes that enable some to benefit from the global and local orders while others are exploited and oppressed by them. And, by ignoring these features, development is able to cast poverty in apolitical terms, calling for solutions non-threatening to elites and other power brokers. Of course, not all development scholars have ignored the political, social, and economic structures promoting and maintaining poverty; feminist scholars in particular have focused intensely on the structural features of oppression (e.g., see Moser 1993; Sen and Grown 1987; Young 1993), though most have not been overly

successful at translating such analysis into successful development projects. This may be for reasons noted by Black (1999): those institutions and individuals successfully focusing on “important” work—like land reform, for example—are also those most likely to be quickly suppressed. Such work draws a ready and negative reaction from privileged classes, whose interests may be threatened. Changing structures is difficult; handing out new high-yield seeds, by contrast, is relatively easy.

As discussed in the previous chapter, twinning likewise does not focus on the structural features underpinning Haiti’s poverty. Like Ferguson’s (1994:37) analysis of the ways the World Bank frames Lesotho, where “the colonial past is a blank, economic stagnation is due to government inaction, and ‘development’ results from ‘development projects,’” many St. Robert’s Haiti committee members have little to no knowledge of Haiti’s history, its position in the global political economy, or its past interactions with “development” regimes. While many are critical of the divisions cleaving Haitian society along “elite” and “peasant” lines, committee members tend not to know why these cleavages exist, how they came to be, or how they might be addressed or undone. Likewise, while some mentioned the “indemnity” that Haiti was forced to pay in exchange for political and economic recognition following its independence in the early 19th century (see Farmer 1994), no one suggested this was relevant for understanding why Haiti continues to be poor today. Rather, the government—conceived of primarily as an isolated entity apart from regional or global forces—itself was blamed for its inadequacies and as the fomenter of Haitian poverty. But, even with this explanation, nothing in St. Robert’s program endeavors to transform—or even address—what it considers to be the failures of Haiti’s government. No, the task is simply too large, too

overwhelming. Moreover, as in conventional development, some feel twinning is not supposed to be overtly “political.”

The reality is, of course, that twinning does have some political overtones. For example, when groups first travel to Haiti and stay at the PTPA guesthouse in Port-au-Prince, a guide takes them on a tour of “the stations of the cross.” These are sites throughout the city where political persecution and violence have occurred, especially that targeting Haitian social justice advocates. Aside from giving twinning participants a platform from which to critique Haiti’s elite, however, these “tours” are largely disconnected from twinning’s daily activities, in part, because some openly reject their political overtones:

They had the stations of cross, fourteen places where horrible things happened, so that Aristide came to power. Well, anything I had ever seen or read about Aristide, he was a crook. And, this was obscene, ridiculous. But our group was very much involved in that. But, I felt there was undue involvement in politics that I didn’t agree with. It’s one thing to do Christian service and brotherhood. And, it’s quite another to be involved in politics (Interview #9).

Indeed, drawing this out a bit more, Mother Theresa is held as a model to emulate by several in the twinning program: Mother Theresa, who devoted her life to the poor, living and working among them, and sacrificing her own material comfort. Yet, some scholars have critiqued Mother Theresa for her myopia, for herself failing to address the larger conditions encouraging and maintaining poverty among the groups with whom she was working. Her efforts were so widely esteemed and supported, some allege, precisely because they posed no threat to existing hierarchies; they in no way challenged the status quo. Instead, Mother Theresa’s work served to blunt the structural violence impinging on people’s lives, thereby shifting focus to caring for the poor and

downtrodden rather than on challenging the conditions of their vulnerability. Certainly, the same critique could be levied against those working in twinning. One response to such a critique is that the world needs both kinds of approaches to remedying poverty: those that revolutionize structures of inequality and those focused on caring for the oppressed (Shaw 2005).

Perhaps this is not a fair critique, as those active in twinning are clear—their intention is to save the individual starfish, not clear the beach of them. And, this thinking has parallels in more conventional initiatives. In particular, many mainstream participatory development approaches have been criticized for adopting an overly “local” orientation—one that precludes engagement with macro-level features (Cooke and Kothari 2001). As Mohan and Hickey (2004:61) suggest, participation has been castigated for encouraging “fragmentation rather than multi-scaled strategies.” Yet, those responding to such critiques maintain that local-level focus need not be isolating. For example, Gaventa (2004), Hickey and Mohan (2004) and Cornwall (2004) each examine the ways citizenship and “space” can be transformed and transforming to allow for local-level action to pierce exploitative structures—especially via democratic practices.

The goals of the Haiti program, as laid out by those most active in the program, are varied and not always agreed upon. But, their approach to development is limited in nature, as discussed on the last chapter. While defining development in diverse terms, committee members also tend to embrace development that “develops people” and is locally grounded. I am not saying this focus is good or bad, right or wrong. Rather, I am suggesting that by concentrating so intently on the “local level” and framing their

projects primarily around addressing Haitian poverty through food aid and education, the St. Robert's Haiti program does—like conventional development—reduce Haiti's challenges to a series of “problems”—partialization in Poppendieck's (1998:307) terms—that can be addressed through apolitical solutions, though in this case delivered via caring, committed brothers and sisters of the Catholic faith. Haitian “underdevelopment” then becomes manageable as a series of identifiable “problems” to “fix,” with solutions modeled on the application of “Western” knowledges and scientific understandings of the world, attained through formal education. Indeed, as discussed earlier, many on St. Robert's Haiti committee see their twinning program as equipping Haitians with the skills and training necessary for them to assess their situations and forge their own solutions to the problems of poverty. Meanwhile, the structural features of Haiti's inequity, oppression, and position in the world economy are largely ignored.

The poor are “backwards”

In a similar vein, conventional development discourses traditionally conceive of those targeted for development as somehow deficient or delinquent, in need of external “salvation.” Again, rather than situating poverty or powerlessness within a wider framework addressing issues of structural inequality, these discourses suggest the need to reconfigure the poor. Escobar (1995:41), for example, argues that “Development proceeded by creating ‘abnormalities’ (such as the ‘illiterate’, the ‘underdeveloped,’ the ‘malnourished,’ ‘small farmers,’ or ‘landless peasants’), which it would later treat and reform.” That is, rather than reflecting “truth” or “reality,” discourses—in this case development discourses—construct “the poor” as objects of knowledge that can be intervened upon and managed.

Indeed, Escobar's (1995:23) assertion that "management of poverty called for interventions in education, health, hygiene, morality, and employment and the instilment of good habits of associations, savings, child rearing and so on" is strikingly descriptive of the very nature of St. Robert's twinning. As discussed in earlier chapters, twinning participants assess, label, and attempt to redress what is seen to be lacking among Haiti's poor: adequate food, environmental quality, jobs, education, medical knowledge. But, perhaps more tellingly, some also attribute these problems to the deficiencies of Haitians themselves, conceiving of the Haitian peasantry as uncultivated, uneducated, illiterate.

These constructions are not unique to committee members at St. Robert, however. They are fundamental to the configuration and exercise of development more broadly. Escobar (1995:110) calls such practices "labeling," whereby the "whole reality of a person's life [can be] reduced to a single feature or trait...[and] the person is turned into a case." Again, this diverts attention away from the structural forces impinging on peoples' lives and instead focuses on explanations deriving from characteristics internal to the poor, which can be treated through some technological fix (Escobar 1995:110). James Ferguson (1994), for example, considers how those "targeted" for development projects in Lesotho are necessarily defined in ways requiring outside intervention: as "backward" subsistence farmers; cut off from markets and the modern cash economy; as adhering to anachronistic, "traditional" livestock customs due to lack of knowledge and absence of technical inputs. Ferguson deftly deconstructs these "myths," demonstrating how, in reality, these "farmers" have

been deeply embedded in a modern, capitalist reserve labor economy and non-commercial livestock practices.

Similarly, Jennie M. Smith (2001:31) focuses her analysis on professional developers' construction of peasants in Haiti.

Just as the economic and political agendas of the Haitian state and elite have been fueled by their chronic "othering" of the Haitian masses, so too has aid to Haiti been buttressed by "aiders" constructions of the "aided." I have found in my work among numerous international agencies a fairly descriptive image of the Haitian poor. This image consists of four intertwined and multifaceted characteristics: a preference for dependency on more powerful others (a dependency mentality, or, as it sometimes called, a slave mentality); a fatalism leading to apathy and resignation; an inability to think analytically or critically about their situation; and a chronic resistance to working cooperatively and effectively in the interest of the common good.

Smith's descriptions, in fact, closely align with stereotypes held by many on St.

Robert's Haiti committee. As discussed in earlier chapters, committee members widely view Haitians as less motivated than Americans, resigned to their poverty, unable to think critically, and selfish. Said one Haiti committee member:

I used to hear people speak of problems who'd been involved in Haiti before. They spoke of ingrained attitudes. I thought they were being awfully negative. But, now I see some of those issues are there and have to be overcome (Interview #1).

How did these broader stereotypes come to the attention of St. Robert's committee?

Certainly Tom—introduced earlier as the director of a forestry and agricultural extension project St. Robert's partially funds—is to some extent responsible. Tom runs an officially recognized non-profit, partakes in development training seminars, reads development texts, and interacts with others in Haiti who work in "official" development channels. This puts him in contact with other development "professionals," many of whom are likely to hold views similar to those analyzed by

Smith above. Moreover, Tom is vocal in what he views as the shortcomings of the Haitian peasantry, particularly their preference for “hand-outs,” inability to think critically, and their apathy. For example, in talking about the inadequacies of the Haitian educational system, Tom decries what he sees as the failures of learning “by rote.”

They cannot problem-solve. If you can’t problem-solve, how can you have community development? I asked a group one time why the river ran brown after it rains. They couldn’t answer, couldn’t even begin to guess. Even Jean-Rony, who’s at the top of his class in high school, didn’t know. They weren’t taught why and so they didn’t know. They couldn’t go any farther than that.

Tom is an influential force among some on the committee because he actually lives in Verrettes for most of the year. He is able to claim knowledge about the area, “culture,” and needs that others on the committee cannot. And, this gives him a platform from which to espouse his particular visions, which are more closely linked to conventional development initiatives. When Tom is in Michigan, he often will attend Haiti committee meetings, if they are scheduled. And, he stays in email contact with several committee members while in Haiti. The point is, Tom is exposed to the “conventional” stereotypes of Haitians, and in his experiences, they ring true. He then is able to communicate these ideas to others on the committee, with whom they likewise resonate.

As mentioned, many scholars argue these conceptualizations and constructions of the “developing” are fundamental to development’s discourse and practice (Escobar 1995; Esteva 1992; Ferguson 1994; Crush 1995). I agree, and I suggest such discourses also characterize the ways some St. Robert committee members imagine Haitians and their communities. They provide constructions that at once explain what is happening in Haiti—Haitians are uneducated and so unable to forge solutions to their problems—

while also providing remedy—by sponsoring educational programs, Haitians will be able to find jobs and provide for themselves.

But, the situation in twinning is, in fact, more complex than Escobar and others posit for development. As discussed earlier, in tandem with a notion of Haitians as examples to repudiate—and more importantly here, to “fix”—Haitians are also held up as models to emulate. That is, committee members tend to simultaneously frame Haitians both in terms of deficiencies and righteousness. Haitians’ perceived greater spirituality, commitment to family, simpler living, non-materialism, and the like provide inspiration for some on the committee to rethink their own values, ways of life, and priorities. That is, Haitians, by virtue of their poverty, offer committee members alternate visions for being in the world, alternate models of reality. And, these are powerful lessons for middle- and upper-middle class committee members, who suddenly find themselves questioning the otherwise unrecognized and unchallenged features of their own lives: the importance of work, money, accumulation, consumption, material comfort.

Professionalizing Knowledge for the Exercise of Power

At its most basic, “the” hegemonic development discourse is thought to be a construct through which poor countries are “known, specified, and intervened upon” (Escobar 1995). Anti-development scholars argue that Western models of development arose from the creation of a constructed and specialized knowledge about the global south. This knowledge was predicated upon notions of poverty and the need to correct its “abnormalities” (e.g. illiteracy, overpopulation). By institutionalizing a cadre of “experts” to address the “problem” of underdevelopment, a position was created for the

exercise of power over that object: the global south. Through the hegemony of norms and values, development discourses convinced the global south of their own “underdevelopment” and promised them a better life through outside intervention into their economies and societies. And, in the process, not only were jobs created for the Western middle-class, Third World countries were brought back under (post) colonial control and administration.

Post-structural discourse analysts suggest that professionalized knowledge is one way this power is exercised and reproduced. One question that emerges is, how do we know when knowledge is “professionalized?” What exactly does that mean? Or, even more basically, what is knowledge? Arce and Long (1992:221) suggest that knowledge is not simply an accumulation of “facts” that are learned or discovered, but rather knowledge is a way of “construing the world,” it is constructive, and is “constituted by the ways in which people categorize, code, process and impute meaning to their experiences.” That is, knowledge is the way people make sense of and give their lives meaning. Knowledge, according to Arce and Long, is destructive, as well, because it destroys other possible frames through which to see the world.

Robert Chambers defines “normal professionalism” as the thinking, values, methods, and behavior dominant in a profession or discipline. He suggests it is both stable and conservative (Chambers 1993:3). Indeed, it is on the basis of specialized training—“diploma disease” (Chambers 1993:3)—and experience that development professionals are able to position themselves as experts within development institutions. They are granted legitimate claim to development knowledge and have license to design and deliver projects. Their authority as “experts” is recognized and rewarded by those

within the conventional development apparatus. Rooted in Enlightenment thinking “professional knowledge / expertise” depends on “Western scientific knowledge...as...universally valid and applicable to all,” though only some are granted “expert” status (Parpart 1995:222-223; Crewe and Harrison 1998). Consequently, development practitioners overvalue knowledge attained via formal education while undervaluing and discounting knowledge attained in other ways.

Development practitioners (and scholars) [tend] to undervalue knowledge that comes from living in poverty, from working out solutions to daily life in specific, often difficult locales, and from cultural traditions that have provided basic but adequate survival patterns for hundreds of years (Parpart 1995:229).

Or, to put it more bluntly,

Rural development is a process whereby affluent urban-dwellers teach poor peasants how to survive in the countryside without money (Black 1999:10).

Development experts craft the discourses by which development can be

“known” and discussed. Dorothy Smith suggests:

Professional discourses provide the categories with which facts can be named and analyzed and thus have an important role in the constituting the phenomena that the organization knows and describes. Facts are presented in standardized ways. In this sense, facts are an aspect of social organization, a practice of knowing that, through the use of ready made categories, construct an object as external to the knower and independent of him or her (in Escobar 1995:107).

As with all discourses, then, those characterizing St. Robert’s twinning are “category-driven,” presenting “facts” about Haiti and Haitians in fairly standardized ways. Haitians are poor, uneducated, illiterate, oppressed by the government, and in need of external intervention. Whether these “facts” are “true” or not is irrelevant; rather, the constructions themselves reveal how those on the Haiti committee are able

to—indeed, required to—configure Haiti and Haitians as deficient and “abnormal,” how Haitians are defined in terms of what they lack.

And yet, as previously mentioned, while Haitians are constructed in traditionally “developmentalist” terms as deficient and abnormal, twinning simultaneously casts Haitians as pillars of hope and inspiration, as models to emulate in some ways. There is a real sense among some on the St. Robert Haiti committee—and explicitly stated within PTPA promotional literatures—that Haitians do have something to teach Americans about simplicity of faith, uncomplicated living, the importance of family. Nevertheless, like the more “negative” assessments, these more “positive” spins are merely constructions invented according to the imaginations of those active in twinning. Again, I am not interested in whether such assessments are “true” or not; indeed, scholars like Jennie Smith (2001) are explicit that Haitians *do* have something to teach Americans about these things. Rather, my interest here is in the ways such constructions stem from, buoy, and challenge hegemonic development discourses. And, in this case, they tend to stem from the inherent “othering” that development entails. Because of their poverty, Haitians are cast as fundamentally *different* from U.S. twinning participants. That is, Haitians’ poverty provides the framework through which St. Robert Haiti committee members make sense of Haitians, both as models of inspiration and repudiation. So, whether esteeming their focus on family, greater spirituality, or lack of materialism, or lamenting their illiteracy, laziness, evasiveness, or dishonesty, Haitians are understood in terms of their poverty—both for what it “gives” and denies them and for why it exists.

From their positions of relative power and privilege, St. Robert's committee members largely are able to establish the parameters of the twinning and "development" in Haiti. Their representations inform the rest of the parish about who Haitians are, what their lives are like, and the best way to "improve" them. And, the authority and "expertise" of committee members seems to be accepted to a degree, as evidenced by the continued financial support the twinning program enjoys at St. Robert, both in terms of individual contributions, as well as allocations from the church's annual budget.

With funding and access to "the people" through twinning networks, there are relatively few barriers for those wishing to engage in Haitian development. The Haitian state allows foreigners, their goods, and money into the country without too much hassle. Geographically, getting to Haiti is simple, quick, and relatively inexpensive. Through twinning, in-country networks are established and able to assist with internal travel. Indeed, the ease of entering into Haitian development might help explain why Haiti in general is so intensely subject to the development "gaze." While reliable numbers are impossible to find, some estimate the number of NGOs currently working for development in Haiti is anywhere from 2,000-10,000 (World Bank 1998), though Haiti's population is only around eight million and its territory about the size of Massachusetts. Assessing this state of affairs, Tom lamented what he considers to be the overly facile entry of non-experts into Haitian development:

In other countries, like Africa [sic], people who go there to work must have all these ideas, they're experts. But, Haiti is so close, you have all these people who go thinking they know—neophytes—who think they know where they're going, what they're doing.

Despite Tom's skepticism, it is certainly legitimate to ask, are those comprising St. Robert's Haiti committee development experts? Or, even "specialists," as

mentioned earlier? Certainly, when held to the “diploma” standard they are not. They are not educated in development economics or related fields. They have not enrolled in special development courses. They will not be showing up for work at the World Bank or giving papers at conventional development conferences.³³ They do not make a living from their development activities. At the same time, however, they have experiential knowledge, grounded in twinning networks and in Haiti. And, they parlay this knowledge into projects, presentations, and practice. Some also read academic articles related to Haiti, including works by Paul Farmer, and draw selectively from them in framing critiques of Haiti’s predatory state, for example. So, while lay development practitioners might be marginalized within conventional development regimes, they certainly have “space” enough outside the “development machine” to exercise their knowledge and practice of development.

But, what about the intentional (or at least intended) “mutuality” of twinning? The idea that St. Robert and Our Lady are “equal partners” in twinning? The fact the most of the projects established in Verrettes stem from suggestions made by the priests there? Addressing similar “partnerships,” Parpart (1995:240) has noted,

Cooperation based on equal partnerships between Northern (and some Southern) experts is rare and difficult. Most partnerships between North and South have focused on transmitting information *from* the North *to* the South, or from Southern experts to the poor. Many have been fraught with “tensions and conflicts” and have failed to produce the expected benefits.

33 Nevertheless, PTPA has sponsored conferences for individuals and parishes active in the twinning program. For example, in June 2003 PTPA sponsored the “Medical Mission Conference” in Indianapolis, Indiana. Paul Farmer and several other healthcare specialists sponsored sessions on topics like “Voodoo and Its Effects on Healthcare” and “Organizing a Surgical Team.” A conference held by PTPA in Nashville in September 2004 drew St. Robert’s participation, including as “expert” presenters.

This seems largely to be the case with St. Robert's twinning, where despite attempting to be attentive to differences in power and "culture," committee members ultimately value their own knowledge systems and "expertise" above that of Haitians. That is, despite a voiced concern with building a "give-and-take" relationship, the practice of twinning is often more a "one way street." Committee members often speak of twinning as more about their giving to Our Lady, with little "benefit" to themselves. The relationships between the parishes, as well as the individuals within them, are largely framed by the "experts" on St. Robert's Haiti committee and center on projects in Haiti, funding, accountability, and "helping" Haitians. St. Robert's committee members, then, are largely "setting the rules" of the twinning, how it can be imagined and practiced. While the priests in Haiti do resist the "management" systems put in place by St. Robert's committee (e.g., by not providing regular accounting, by asking that St. Robert not visit Our Lady, or by refusing to help in this dissertation research), ultimately the encounters between the two parishes are bound by the "rules" established by St. Robert. St. Robert's Haiti committee's discourses on development and Haiti "represent the world as it is for those who rule it, rather than as it is for those who are ruled" (Escobar 1995:108). At the end of the day, then, St. Robert's twinning—even though a "lay" initiative outside of the conventional "professional" sphere—constructs "expert" discourses that both legitimize their intervention into Verrettes and provide a rationalization for their management of the program.

Twinning as Counter-Development?

As discussed in earlier sections, anti-development scholars reject development as a theoretical and practical enterprise, "not merely on account of its results but

because of its intentions, its world-view and mindset” (Nederveen Pieterse 2000:175). Instead, they imagine a “post-development” era, where “the centrality of development as an organizing principle of social life would no longer hold” (Escobar 2000). There are two different ways this transformation—or more precisely, “undoing” of development—might proceed: from anthropologists’ radical disengagement from development (e.g., Sachs 1992) or their active involvement in and attempts to subvert development (e.g., Gardner and Lewis 1996).

In both cases, post-development scholars suggest that anthropology of development analyses should “call attention to diversity, highlight alternatives, show interconnectedness, and uncover the complexity of social and economic life” so as to challenge development’s key assumptions and representations and provide alternative ways of seeing (Gardner and Lewis 1996:50). One way to do this, they suggest, is by looking at alternative or “counter” visions to development as they are (re)created at “local” level “interfaces,” where individuals with differing interests, resources, and power come together (Arce and Long 1992). I agree, which is why this project explores parish-to-parish twinning, where “grassroots” communities come together to forge relatively novel approaches to development and cross-cultural collaboration. While twinning clearly exemplifies the prevalence of development thinking outside of official development institutions, a question that hangs over this project is, does twinning constitute counter-development? Is it “alternative development,” an alternative to development, or something entirely different?

One way to tackle this question is to consider twinning within a broader frame of NGOization and the “revolution” NGOs were supposed to unleash within the

development world (Fisher 1997). Some suggest that NGOs have been idealized as “doing good” because they are thought not to be motivated by politics and profits but by other factors—such as religiosity, charity, humanism. Both critics of development—like those in the anti-development camp—as well as development supporters have hailed NGOs as the solution to development’s failures. NGOs are understood by some to be more efficient than government programs, better at providing welfare services, a way to overcome the “bad policy environments” of rogue states. Others suggest that NGOs—and grassroots organizations, in particular—are vehicles for resisting and altering power relationships, that they can transform state and society through their ability to politicize issues and magnify “subjugated knowledges” (Fisher 1997:6). While the purpose of this dissertation is not to evaluate the “efficiency” or “success” of twinning’s programs in Haiti—but rather to assess twinning as it relates to broader initiatives within the development regime—it seems clear that twinning would not fulfill the hopes of either camp.

Like conventional development, twinning participants are very interested in trying to measure the “effectiveness, accountability, disbursement rates, and ‘visible impact’ of their programs” (Rew 1997:91). Yet, St. Robert finds it exceedingly difficult to get a good understanding of the “on the ground” needs in Verrettes, to know whether their “goals” are being achieved, or to complete any sort of comprehensive project evaluation. As mentioned at one meeting, the committee often takes a “flying leap into the darkness” in trying to design, deliver, and assess how their twinning relationship is actually working in Verrettes.

This stems in large part from the very structure of St. Robert's twinning, where development is the focus but the "typical" development apparatus integral to "measuring success" is missing. Twinning is driven by volunteers—many of whom are enmeshed in busy professional careers. These volunteers donate their time, talent, and money, which keeps "administrative" staff salaries to a minimum. But, the result is two-fold. First, only a handful—and probably more realistically, only a few—invest considerable time in making the twinning work. The program began at St. Robert from the initiative of one particularly dedicated and inspiring woman, and it continues to be directed by only a few. Second, this creates not only an institutional "weakness," in that if those most active on the committee needed to halt participation, few others would be able to readily pick up the reins, but it also centralizes power and decision-making in the parish to only a few people, who may or may not "represent" the wishes or desires of the larger St. Robert parish.

The local-level orientation of twinning also tends to obfuscate, or render irrelevant, the "systems" in which twinning occurs. That is, issues of power, authority, inequity, and the like tend to be overshadowed by the intense focus on meeting individual needs in Verrettes. The macro-level context is not—and cannot—be addressed via twinning networks, as it is practiced. Importantly, this is a critique that has been levied against NGOs, in general, particularly those that practice participatory strategies.

[NGOs'] principle weakness is that they have difficulty coming to grips with, and then addressing, the processes and relationships underlying rural poverty....Much NGO work is conducted in isolation from wider policy issues (Farrington and Bebbington 1993:184; see also MacDonald 1995).

Recognizing its limitations, one man said, you are not going to “change the world” through twinning, maybe only make a few peoples’ lives better. And, while this may certainly be true, others have raised concerns about the problems such programs inherently engender. By blunting the negative effects of the current social order, the “oppressed” are “pacified” and their political potential muted (Ferguson 1994). In her study of the U.S. food-banking system, for example, Poppendieck (1998) suggests food-banks ultimately have a negative effect on the poor, because like “development,” they turn hunger into a technical problem “appropriately” managed via private interventions. Food-banks shift the focus from the underlying causes of hunger to its manageable solution. As one food-bank worker commented, “In the worst analysis, [food-banking] is an awful thing—what we’re doing is allowing an oppressive system to continue” (Poppendieck 1998:268).

Twinning, though a Catholic project, in many ways reflects these trends in “secular” social service delivery. But, it also fits within a broader trajectory identified by Wuthnow as characteristic of American religious projects more generally:

Recent surveys indicate that caring for the needy and contributing time to help with community service projects is still a value to which most Americans subscribe. On the other hand, Americans are also intensely individualistic, wanting to be self sufficient, skeptical of people who are not self sufficient, and driven by such self-interested motives as greed, materialism, and excessive consumerism. Religious programs are situated among these contradictory impulses. They often encourage people to think compassionately about the poor, but they also channel this thinking in individualistic ways that may encourage charity more than public advocacy on behalf of the poor (Wuthnow 2004:21).

Indeed, faith-based and voluntary efforts are rather fashionable in the early 2000s. In a variety of public forums, President George W. Bush has encouraged these “impulses” ideologically and in 2001, he established the Office of Faith-based and Community

Initiatives to “strengthen and expand the role of FBCOs [faith-based community organizations] in providing social services” (Office of the Press Secretary 2001:webpage). Moreover, the United Nations declared 2001 as the International Year of Volunteers to help encourage and support “volunteer service,” which the UN defines as “as non-profit, non-wage and non-career action that individuals carry out for the well-being of their neighbours, community or society at large” (UN 2006:webpage).

Within this context, one could argue that twinning’s “instrument effects” (Ferguson 1994) are similar to the “contradictory impulses” identified by Wuthnow above. In the context of a weak—but predatory—state where social service delivery is otherwise non-existent, twinning provides Haitian parishes access to external funding through which to provide food, medicine, education, water, and other goods and services to their parishioners. It also provides priests with new vehicles, fancy rectories, and other “amenities” they might otherwise lack. But, in the process of building these relationships, identifying local-level problems and forging solutions, the focus shifts from the underlying and structural forces causing suffering among Haiti’s people to managing them through apolitical interventions. In effect, twinning can serve to depoliticize poverty, as Ferguson (1994) suggests “development” more broadly does in Lesotho. However, in contrast to Ferguson’s analysis, twinning does not prop up the power of the Haitian state. While constrained by the state in certain instances (e.g., travel visas, customs), twinning largely operates outside of state channels and is explicitly critical of the Haitian “government.”

Twinning focuses on skirting the state, opting instead to work directly with grassroots communities. Yet, MacDonald (1995) suggests that people-to-people

linkages may, in fact, be more “dangerous” than aid conventionally routed through the state, because it “penetrates the very fibers of the community, creating new forms of clientism and cooption.” Indeed, twinning *does* further concentrate the power of priests in Haiti. That is, Haitian priests are already in relatively powerful positions vis-à-vis their parishioners. Twinning provides priests with access to relatively large sums of money, which even when “earmarked” for specific purposes—e.g., feeding school children—priests exercise some discretion over. In parishes outside of Verrettes, I personally have seen veritable “rectory-castles” constructed with U.S. donations and have found stockpiles of supplies and other “goodies” shipped for specific people but never delivered to them by priests. And, remember that the “pew money” was spent on a backyard renovation project at the Verrettes rectory, where a gate and walkway were constructed to shield the priests from the weather as they walked from the rectory to the church—though some speculate to shield them from the prying eyes of parishioners. This, too, is an irony of twinning. Such assertions of “agency” on the part of priests serve to diminish the control and power U.S. Haiti committees attempt to leverage over Haitian priests. At the same time, however, they expand the distance between the priest and his “flock.” Left out of the equation are those twinning is intended to most engage: parishioners in *both* locations. And yet, the question can be raised—are priests better able to “speak for” local people than others might be? That is, while acknowledging the power and authority priests have, especially compared to others in their communities, does their presence in communities, engagement with locals, and likely concern for the parishioners make them—while perhaps not ideal—better spokespersons compared to development “professionals” from Port-au-Prince or abroad?

Another question one might ask is, are programs like twinning inherently demeaning? Returning to this notion of professionalizing knowledge, I would argue that twinning—like “conventional development”—requires a “logical framework. But, in the adoption of these terms and frames of reference, they become the property of the developers, not the developed” (Kaufmann 1997:120). By constructing Haitians as deficient, twinning committee members’ configure a framework whereby they can “save” Haitians, they can “better” them through education and making them employable. The frames of reference Haiti committee members necessarily use are their own; they compare, judge, and imagine Haitians from their own positions as middle-class, white American suburbanites. In fact, some have argued that such attempts to “help” others are really little more than affirmations of one’s own position and superiority (Gronemeyer 1992). “Help is extended for the sake of the achievements of one’s own (Western) civilization. It serves to confirm and secure the standards of normality” (Gronemeyer 1992:61). This might be partially true of twinning, where the twinning committee’s own experiences do serve as the template for imaging a different Haiti. For example,

The first day Father [Alexis] was with us, we met...for a potluck. We asked if the Haitians have potluck suppers. He said, “The Haitian people do not have potlucks because they don’t eat everyday.” I have NO IDEA of what this would be like; I can’t even imagine not having three meals a day (unless I choose not to eat) (Weekly Bulletin, 4/26/1998).

Gronemeyer (1992) also argues that “help” generally can be characterized in three ways: self-confident, superior, and self-congratulatory. And, to a degree, these elements do characterize St. Robert’s twinning. For example, in commenting about matching St. Robert and Our Lady, Doug said after returning from the first trip the St.

Robert committee made to Haiti, “I got ‘em back, and they took the ball and ran with it. There are lots of professionals there, so they know how to work [to get things done].” There is an air of self-confidence that comes from those on the committee being well educated and relatively affluent; they are not afraid to push for what they think is in the best interest of St. Robert and Verrettes (e.g., contacting the bishop to protest Father Jean’s transfer from Our Lady). But, this self-confidence occasionally slips toward notions of superiority and self-congratulations, as well. A recent correspondence regarding Father Yvens’ impending travel to the U.S.—and his decision to send an assistant priest in his stead—drives home the point: in a memo to themselves, the Haiti committee noted that they had “graciously agreed” that the assistant priest could visit Ada instead of Yvens. They recognize themselves as more powerful than the priest in Haiti, and they see—and explicitly self-label—their intentional tempering of this power as “gracious.”

To return to the question framing this section, what is twinning? Is it development as usual, alternative development, an alternative to development, or something else? From my perspective, I would argue that twinning falls within an “alternative” development paradigm. It fails as an alternative *to* development, because in its “intentions, world-view, and mindset,” twinning is very much characterized by “belief” in development and invested in fomenting its spread throughout Haiti. Many of those on the Haiti committee subscribe to the view that Haitians are impoverished, uneducated, and “diseased,” and that these realities can be mitigated—even if not eliminated—through local-level parish partnering. The fact that these are “non-professionals” undertaking development does not radically alter the frames of reference

(Western, middle-class standards, Enlightenment thinking), the projects they fund, or their intentions to “manage” the projects underway.

That said, I would like to suggest that these frames of reference might better be understood not as the exclusive domain of “development” but of a larger modernist worldview held by middle-class Americans, particularly the “affluent middle class” (Plotnicov 1990:16), writ-large. That is, while the development discourses explored here as part of the operation of the Haiti committee at St. Robert do reflect and buoy discourses described by post-structural scholars as hegemonic, perhaps St. Robert’s Haiti committee—because it is peopled by “manager-professionals” in Leonard Plotnicov (1990:16) terms—is not under the grip of the developmentalist ideas of the hegemonic development apparatus. Rather, perhaps the development apparatus is better understood as one particular exercise of modernity. That is, development does not monopolize modernist discourses. Instead, modernity is the larger project to which development is attached. Development, then, is the site of struggle, the practical application of modernity. Those at St. Robert, despite being “outside the formal dimensions of the aid industry,” are able to replicate, rework, and repeat many of the discourses and practices of development, then, because both conventional and lay approaches rest on similar ideas: notions of superiority, accountability, professional expertise. What it means to be “affluent middle-class” is what it means to be developed. In many ways, St. Robert’s Haiti Committee members are the living embodiment of their modernist agenda.

Martinussen (1999:291) suggests that alternative approaches to development come in two varieties: 1) A redefinition of development’s goals (rejecting economic

growth as an end in itself and instead advocating welfare and human development); 2) A shifting of development toward civil society (emphasizing local communities as a means for promoting human well-being). Twinning actually incorporates both of these variations. Twinning—centered around Catholic notions of “doing good” and “helping” Haitians—challenges certain discourses and practices of more conventional initiatives. Constructed around notions of “mutuality” and attempts to be conscious of power differentials between the two parishes, twinning aspires to cultural sensitivity and builds “relationships” between individuals and parishes. Twinning focuses on meeting basic needs in Haiti, rather than promoting economic growth as a goal in and of itself. And, it explicitly works through “grassroots” pairings, rather than the state, to bring together individual communities in “mutually rewarding” relationships.

At the same time, however, twinning does not attempt to “undo” development in Haiti. Rather, it intends to extend its reach there, to “bring in” those who are perceived as having been neglected by more formal development initiatives. Collapsing the program into its simplest terms, twinning could simply be categorized as a faith-based NGO, interested in “participatory” development that addresses “basic needs” at the grassroots level in Haiti. It draws on discourses of “good governance,” self-sufficiency, and the importance of education. Like NGOs more generally, twinning provides an alternative to “top-down” state-directed development, but it is not an alternative *to* development.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

In a context where globalization, neoliberalism, and a “crisis” in foreign aid are increasingly shifting “development” from a government project to a private one, this dissertation has provided an in-depth look at Catholic parish twinning as one increasingly important manifestation of development’s privatization. Taking as its central concern how “lay” initiatives like U.S.-Haiti parish twinning relate to conventional development discourses and practices, this project has explored in detail what development means for those active on St. Robert’s Haiti twinning program, which has partnered with Our Lady of the Nativity parish in Verrettes, Haiti since 1995.

St. Robert’s Haiti committee is a loosely-knit collective of about twenty-five people that decides the goals and direction of the twinning program. Together with Our Lady, the committee has crafted, funded, and implemented a variety of projects in Verrettes—including those focused on education, food delivery, and microcredit—intended to “help” those in Haiti achieve development. An important question guiding the dissertation has been, what is development—what does it mean, how is it constructed, what are its goals—to these non-credentialed “lay” developers?

I have argued that development, while defined in diverse terms by committee members, generally is constructed to mean two things: developing people (by educating them, providing opportunities for bettering themselves, and promoting self-sufficiency) and locally-grounding development (so that it responds to local aspirations and needs). These constructions translate unevenly into practice, however, in part because accessing and assessing the local has been exceedingly difficult given the language barriers, geographical distance, and “cultural” differences separating these two

parishes. The structure of twinning—with Haiti committees directing U.S.-based twinning activities and Haitian priests in charge of twinning in Haiti—means that a relatively few people are charged with “speaking for” parishioners in each location. It is unclear, for example, the extent to which priests are able or willing to accurately gauge the “needs” of their parishioners or whether the work of the Haiti committee “represents” the wishes of the larger congregation. The result is a “people-to-people” relationship that remains, in many ways, generated from the “top-down” rather than from the “grassroots,” albeit a “top” much nearer the people than one that might be configured from Port-au-Prince or abroad.

The twinning between Our Lady and St. Robert takes a micro-oriented perspective, focusing on helping individuals, or at least, individuals within one relatively small community. As such, rather than locating Haiti’s poverty or its “underdevelopment” within a structural and historical framework, those on the Haiti committee concentrate their efforts and analysis whole-heartedly on the “local-level,” where “problems” are more readily identifiable and treatable. The mix of projects that St. Robert’s funds and Our Lady implements attempts to blunt the effects of poverty, deprivation, and oppression rather than alter or dismantle the larger forces undergirding them.

Twinning’s mandate to “respect” the unique gifts each parish possesses while practicing a “non-controlling mutuality” in their relationships with one another has proven exceedingly difficult for St. Robert. In part, this stems from the development-oriented nature of their partnership with Our Lady. With large sums of money flowing from St. Robert to Our Lady, the Haiti committee feels compelled to “protect the intentions” of their donors and the intended recipients. That is, it expects the money it

sends to Haiti to be used for specified purposes. Resisting these proscriptions, Haitian priests' discretionary use of that money has generated real tension between the two parishes, thereby straining their collaboration.

A second question the dissertation explores is: What relation do private, non-professional initiatives have to the entrenched institutionalized development apparatus critiqued by anti-development scholars? I suggest that in many ways, twinning both reflects and challenges dominant development discourses. On the one hand, St. Robert's twinning invests in the idea of Haiti's "underdevelopment." Identifiable in Haitians' high levels of illiteracy, lack of formal education, malnutrition, disease, unemployment, and other "abnormalities," Haiti is readily acknowledged as "the poorest country in the Western hemisphere." Moreover, these defining features of Haiti's underdevelopment are explained in conventional terms: the result of "bad government," Haitians' lack of education, poor leadership. The result—as in conventional initiatives—is a "depoliticization" of poverty, as it is approached primarily on technical rather than structural terms. Haiti's challenges are transformed into a series of "problems" that can be fixed through targeted apolitical interventions.

Twinning also tends to frame Haiti's peasantry in developmentalist terms: as non-analytical, evasive, uneducated, resigned to poverty. Such conceptualizations of the poor are central to development, more generally, allowing for "easy" explanations for poverty—locating it among the deficiencies and abnormalities of the poor—while also making its solution seem self-evident. Likewise, they serve the same function for St. Robert's Haiti committee.

But, unlike conventional discourses and practices, twinning also constructs Haitians in positive terms. Looking to Haitians at alternate models for “being in the world,” committee members imagine Haitians to be more spiritual, less consumerist, less work-oriented, and more family-focused than Americans. They identify a *joi de vivre* among Haitians attributed to their living “simpler” lives, and they consider Haitians to be very “dignified” and polite. That is, Haiti committee members tend toward a dual construction of Haitians, as models both to emulate and to repudiate. In any case, St. Robert’s committee members imagine that Haitians are very different from themselves, differences that are rooted in Haiti’s poverty.

Escobar (1995:23) asserts that the “Third World can scarcely be thought about in any other terms than its essential trait: poverty.” This is partially true in twinning networks, though a more nuanced read is necessary. Indeed, poverty was the most cited “characteristic” of Haiti that came to people’s minds during free-listing exercises, but it certainly was not the only feature called forth, as just described. But, what might be considered the more “positive” traits attributed to Haitians still are framed in terms of Haitians’ poverty: Haitians are able to be joyful, dignified, and happy *despite* poverty while being more family-oriented, spiritual, and less materialistic *because* of it. In any case, poverty provides the framework for understanding who Haitians “are,” both as models of inspiration and repugnance.

Finally, the dissertation has considered how twinning might be best understood: is it simply another manifestation of the hegemonic development apparatus or something different? I have argued for a conceptualization of twinning as “alternative development”—at once challenging the conventional development framework while

also firmly rooted within it. Contrary to Escobar's (1995:44) assertion that development was (and is) merely "a top-down, ethnocentric, and technocratic approach, which treated people and cultures as abstract concepts, statistical figures to be moved up and down in the charts of 'progress,'" I have found twinning to be intensely focused on "local-level" interactions between Our Lady and St. Robert. St. Robert's committee members focus on individuals, on schools, and on Verrettes—on the particulars, such as are school children eating lunch?—rather than on rising income levels or other conventional development markers. Instead of a focus on economic growth as a goal in and of itself, twinning aspires to "help" Haitians become self-sufficient, to meet their basic needs, to have "choices."

Twinning rhetoric is critical of power differentials between partnered parishes, and it advocates relationships that are "mutually beneficial" and rewarding for both parties. While indeed both St. Robert and Our Lady seem to be "getting something out of" twinning (for Americans, a sense of "doing good," meeting their Christian service obligations, finding new models for being in the world, opportunities for travel; for Haitians, access to goods and services), the reality is that the power differentials are always present. Not only are priests required to provide an accounting of how they spend twinning funds, they are vulnerable to sanction for using the money in ways unintended by the "donors." Priests, however, attempt to evade these management practices, for example, by not providing the required accounting. Such priestly "resistance" meets with a mix of frustration, suspicion, and bewilderment by St. Robert committee members. But, funds often continue to flow, as the Haiti committee attempts to forge and impose an agreeable system for monitoring spending in Haiti.

Twinning at St. Robert invests in the idea of “development” and to its spread throughout Haiti, attempting to “bring in” those who have been marginalized by formal development regimes. For this reason, twinning fails to be an alternative to development. Rather, seeing poverty as indicative of Haiti’s underdevelopment and its lack of “good governance,” St. Robert twinning committee attempts to equip Haitians with the skills and resources necessary to mitigate economic vulnerability and to become successful in the market economy. They focus on education so that Haitians can “analyze their own situations,” forge their own solutions, and hopefully land formal-sector jobs. Twinning, in short, seeks to prepare and integrate Haitians into larger economic systems, where they can access food, water, shelter, and other necessities.

In basic terms, twinning might simply be labeled a faith-based NGO, led by volunteers rather than development “professionals” and serving as an alternative to “top-down” state-directed development. Despite the fact that twinning depends on “lay” developers, the parallels with professional NGO initiatives are clear: the frames of reference are similarly Western and middle-class, the projects they fund are mainstream, and their desire to create efficient projects that can be assessed in terms of effectiveness is overt.

Twinning does not fall within purely conventional discourses, at least as identified by Escobar, Rist, Ferguson and others. But, neither does it fall entirely outside them, either. Instead, twinning straddles the line as “alternative development,” where “lay” developers call forth contested notions of what development means and how it should proceed, and where they attempt to create models for social justice to

stand in solidarity with Haiti's "poor." In the process, they question their own cultural values and find inspiration in the alternate ways of being that Haitians present. But, with the intense focus on "cultural" difference, local-level action, and correcting deficiencies, twinning never articulates an alternative vision *to* development. Rather, like conventional initiatives, it tends to reduce Haiti's challenges to a number of "problems" to fix, while ignoring and depoliticizing the structural features undergirding Haiti's poverty.

So, this leaves the perplexing question of what should be done? While the dissertation does not investigate the impacts of twinning "on the ground" in Haiti, it does raise several concerns about the forms it takes among participants in the U.S. As a scholar concerned about power and resource imbalances separating the wealthy from the poor, I have asked myself whether twinning is something that should be "subverted." In the spirit of Escobar, Sachs, and other anti-development scholars, I wonder whether I should be working to dismantle or undermine twinning. Is twinning an imperialist project or does it affirm a common humanity (albeit a problematic one) across the U.S. and Haiti?

While I do not have a clear answer to this question, I suspect it probably lies somewhere in the middle; twinning probably is best understood as both a humane and imperialist project. It is neither fully one nor the other. That said, my goal here is *not* to undermine twinning or to encourage its "death." In fact, I am horrified by the thought that my work might contribute to the demise of twinning. Like many advocates of participatory research, I believe in local-level empowerment and the promise of grassroots collaborations to revolutionize structural inequality (Farmer 2004). I think as

“alternative development,” twinning holds potential for radically transforming structures of oppression, from the bottom up. But, there are many problematic aspects to twinning, particularly as its theories and practices converge with conventional development initiatives. I have raised them herein not because I have the answers; I do not. But, I want twinning to “succeed” in a way that does not replicate the problems and dangers so well identified as part and parcel of conventional development initiatives. Toward this end, I would like to end the dissertation by raising a series of questions that those active in twinning might consider. In this way, I hope to contribute to their continuing efforts in twinning, development, and the promise of citizen-to-citizen mobilizations, but with a more self-critical eye and sensitivity to the potentially problematic dimensions of church partnering.

Questions for Consideration

Some scholars argue that NGOs can contribute to emancipation of oppressed people by “politicizing” previously unpoliticized issues, such as gender (Fisher 1997:16). What are some issues that could be politicized among twinning participants? Politicizing the relationship between Haiti committee members and priests? Between priests and their flocks?

How can parishioners in Haiti, those supposedly represented by the priests, be better included in twinning design and administration? How can their visions and desires be more fully incorporated? How can direct communication between parishioners in Haiti and Michigan be better facilitated, especially when Michiganders don’t want to be “bothered” by direct requests for money or aid?

Is attempting to bureaucratize twinning, to standardize it, and measure its impacts, a problem? A strength? For whom and why? Who should decide where

resources should be allocated? Priests? Parishioners? Committee members? Based on what set of criteria? Who should be the primary beneficiaries, and how are they identified?

Can the self-identified challenges Haitians face be understood in terms of Haiti's history? Position in global trade networks? Exclusion from aid regimes? What factors do Haitians see as most problematic in their daily lives? How do these vary by class, gender, area of residence?

How can the sense of superiority and managerial tendencies of U.S. Haiti committees be “undone” or undermined? Or, should they not? Who decides? How are these perceived by those in Haiti?

How would twinning look if Haitians were seen to be the examples of “progress” and “advancement” rather than Americans? What if we assumed that they—better than anyone else—understood their circumstances, the constraints they face, the solutions to their problems?

Beyond notions of a greater spirituality and commitment to family, what else do we have to learn from Haitians and their particular circumstances? How do Haitian ideas “undo” ideas that we take for granted?

How does the need to evaluate project success undermine / support twinnings' goal of “mutual partnership”? What does mutual partnership mean?

The U.S. partner is the wealthier parish bestowing money on its Haitian twin. What leverage does that give it over its partner? How might that position of power be tempered? Discussed? Thought about?

Why is the need to “really” understand what is happening on the ground in Haiti so important? What needs are met for the Haiti Committee? Parish? Priest? Beneficiaries?

Gaventa (2004) suggests looking at three continuums of power for successful participatory practice. How might looking at these benefit twinning participants?

1. How spaces are created: i.e., “How and by whom the spaces for participation are shaped”?
2. The places and levels of engagement: In what arenas does participation play out? Where does social, political, and economic power reside? At what levels does participation take place—global, national, local?
3. The degree of visibility of power within them: What are the power dynamics shaping participation? What conflicts are present? Whose voices are present and heard?

Clearly, questions such as these are merely starting points in the re-imagining of Catholic parish twinning. While there are no right or wrong answers, these questions—I hope—will help open dialogue between parish partners in ways that can help twinning move beyond “development in usual,” where necessary, and to strengthen the alternative vision that twinning presently does offer.

APPENDIX ONE

General Interview

Background Info—Individual

1. Interviewee Name: AA
2. Could you tell me a bit about yourself? Your family? What do you do for a living?
3. If you grew up Catholic, how would you describe your own experience of growing up Catholic (e.g., your family's relationship to the church, your religious education and involvement with church activities, etc.)? If you did not grow up Catholic, how and why did you become a Catholic?
4. To you, what are the most meaningful aspects of being a Catholic? Are their facets of being a Catholic or of the Catholic Church that you find troubling or problematic? AA
5. Do you have any Catholic heroes or heroines or people who serve as role models for you? AA
6. What do you think of the direction of the Catholic Church, post-Vatican II? AA
7. Growing up, were you or your family involved in any social organizations or social issues? Are you involved in social organizations or issues now, other than Haiti twinning? AA
8. When you were growing up, what experiences or interactions did you have with other cultures or races? AA

Local Context

9. How long have you been a member at St. Robert? Why did you join the parish? AA
10. How would you describe St Robert, as a parish? AA
11. How does the leadership style of Fr Lou compare to other priests you've known? AA
12. How would you describe Sr. Joan's involvement in St Robert? AA
13. What's the role of the laity in leading St Robert? AA

Involvement in Twinning

14. How did you personally become involved in Haiti twinning? AA
15. In what ways have you participated in the twinning program? AA
16. Are you still active? Why (not)? AA
17. What personal rewards or fulfillment did / do you get out of twinning? Any frustrations? AA
18. As a church community, how does St Robert benefit from being a part of the Haiti program? And, how does Our Lady in Verrettes benefit? Are there any drawbacks for the churches? AA

Notions of the "Third World" and Haiti

19. When you think of Haiti, what are the first five words that come to mind? AA

20. What did you know about Haitian history and culture before joining the twinning? Did you know any Haitians or Haitian Americans? What have you learned since? AA
21. In what ways would you like Haiti to be more like the US? AA
22. In what ways would you like the US to be more like Haiti? AA
23. What do you think of Haitian Vodou? AA
24. What's your favorite memory of traveling in Haiti? Worst? AA
25. How did you respond to requests for money? AA
26. Why do you think Haiti is so poor? AA
27. What do you think can be done to help Haiti out of poverty? A
28. Some people contend Haiti's poverty stems from its legacy as a slave colony. What do you think of that? What do you think of similar explanations of African American poverty in the US? AA
29. Do you see any parallels between the unrest in Haiti and that in other parts of the world, e.g. Iraq or Afghanistan? AA
30. What role should the US government play in other parts of the world? What about US churches or non-profits? AA
31. What does "good government" mean to you? Is "good government" possible everywhere in the world? Why (not)? AA

Development, Missionization and Twinning

32. What is the purpose of the twinning program? AA
33. Why does twinning focus on Haiti, in particular?
34. Do you think of twinning as missionary work? In what ways or why not? AA
35. When you think about what it means for a community to be "developed," what things come to mind?
36. Can you think of any "Third World" countries that would be considered "developed" by your definition? AA
37. Does the twinning aspire to develop Verrettes in any way? How so? AA
38. Under what—if any—circumstances do you think Haiti-US parish twinning would no longer be necessary? AA
39. What role—if any—do you think the US government should play in Haiti? AA

St Robert Programming

40. Could you talk a bit about the different programs St Robert's sponsors in Verrettes? AA
41. Why did St Robert's decide to establish these programs? AA
42. What happens when the priests in Haiti request something St Robert thinks is undesirable or unnecessary? AA
43. Are there programs or projects you'd like to see St Robert sponsor in Haiti? In the US? AA
44. Do you think any of the existing programs should be dismantled? Why (not)? AA

Conflict and Cooperation

45. Could you talk a little about what the Haiti Committee is and its purpose? AA

46. What's the role of the priests—both in the US and Haiti—in twinning decision-making? What is Sr. Joan's role? AA
47. What happens when there are differences of opinion about the twinning program? AA
48. Are there differences that can't be overcome? AA

Bettering Twinning

49. What suggestions do you have for strengthening the St Robert-Verrettes twinning? AA
50. What do you think are the most important "lessons" that St Robert's has learned since beginning the twinning? AA
51. What advice would you give parishes interested in joining the twinning program? AA

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