



# Transformations at the Edge of the World

By Ronald J. Morgan, Editor, Cynthia Toms Smedley

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Each year, thousands of students from faith-based universities across the United States venture, through study abroad programs, to the edge of the world. What happens to them while they are there? For the editors of this volume, the edge of the world is not a place of physical remoteness where cell phone coverage runs out, nor is it a region of economic marginality. Instead, it is a place of personal transformation, the point of convergence between students spiritual development and their commitment to global engagement. To help students arrive in such a place, faculty and staff seek holistic approaches to education. In the study abroad context, holistic education emphasizes formation of personal ethics, cultivation of empathy, the creation of deep communities, and commitment to social responsibility. This collection of essays is characterized by the diversity of its voices. The contributors represent a broad range of faith-based institutions and a wide array of academic disciplines. The study abroad programs they describe, scattered across five continents, reflect a variety of models. Gathered into this pioneering collection are essays that theorize about the conjunction of spiritual formation and global engagement, share practices that are currently bearing fruit, and identify potential areas of growth and improvement for the future.

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## **Editorial Review**

### Review

Our experience overwhelmingly affirms that participation in international study and service is more than academic learning, encountering other cultures, or equipping for vocation; it is to set out on a life-long quest, the destination of which IS the journey. In leaving the familiar, students cross intellectual, emotional, and spiritual thresholds that weave together discovery, participation and engagement that leads to transformation. In an increasingly interconnected world such learning is essential. For humanity and all of creation to flourish, we must understand our differences and our connectedness, our uniqueness and our relationship. We must learn to become neighbors. This book presents and synthesizes best practices in faith-centered global transformational learning, and charts critical directions for deepening engagement with this field. -- Paul W. Robinson, director and professor of the Human Needs and Global Resources (HNGR) Program, Wheaton College

What jumps out from these skillfully written descriptions of thirteen study-abroad programs at American Christian colleges and universities is the Christian conviction, imagination, and sensitivity to the other that has gone into the design of these programs. Tens of thousands of American students travel or live abroad each year. Most of them room with each other, tour the sites, talk a bit with the natives, eat the local food, have a good time, and return unchanged. The aim of these programs is that the students will not only learn about the places in which they find themselves but will themselves be changed their chauvinism unsettled, their ability to listen enhanced, their horizons expanded, their commitment to shalom deepened. For me, it was inspiring to learn that this is going on. --Nicholas Wolterstorff, Noah Porter Professor Emeritus of Philosophical Theology, Yale University, and Senior Fellow, Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture, University of Virginia

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### About the Author

Ronald J. Morgan is Associate Professor of History and Director of ACU in Oxford (England) for Abilene Christian University. Cynthia Toms Smedley serves as the Director of Educational Immersions at the University of Notre Dame's Center for Social Concerns.

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