

Growing from good soil

A recap of the 2014 HNGR Symposium

Craig Sorley opened the 2014 HNGR Symposium with a reading from Genesis. “The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.’... This is our mission,” he said of his organization, Care of Creation Kenya, “spreading a passion for Christ and his creation for the sake of the poor.”

This theme set the tone for the rest of the symposium with each speaker adding ways in which the audience could care for the created world for the sake of the poor. The Friday afternoon panel featured farmers who deal with soil under unique conditions. Dr. Grace Ju Miller highlighted her work with Honduran farmers using tropical soils on steep slopes. Chris Prochot represented The Chicago Botanical Garden’s Windy City Harvest project, a group of urban farmers that grow gardens on the roofs of buildings and sells produce in food deserts. Finally, Jeff and Peggy Boshart championed organic market farming. They inherited a plot of over-worked and depleted soil when they began their farm in Ft. Atkinson, Wisconsin.

Dr. Sarah-Lan Mathez-Stiefel, Scientific Director of HNGR host partner A Rocha Peru, was our Friday afternoon speaker. She emphasized the importance of scientific research to inform agricultural and environmental practices to keep rare and important ecological habitats like the Peruvian coast from being destroyed.

The symposium closed with Dr. Norman Uphoff explaining about a new breakthrough in the world of rice growing that can be applied to many staple crops across the world. While recognizing that the Green Revolution of the 1970’s moved agriculture forward in many ways, the current obsession with increasing agricultural inputs (fertilizer, seeds, water, etc.) is putting the world on track for a resource crisis. Instead, SRI (system of rice intensification) decreases the inputs, which actually increases the harvest.

For those of you who were unable to join us, all the main symposium sessions are available online. You can watch them at HNGR’s 2014 Symposium page at wheaton.edu/HNGR.



From top to bottom: Sarah-Lan Mathez-Stiefel, Norman Uphoff, and Craig Sorley

Ideas for the 2015 HNGR Symposium? We’d love to hear them! Email your thoughts and suggestions to hngr@wheaton.edu



Add your name and contact information to the HNGR “Next Steps” Directory!

The HNGR class of 2013 (Wheaton 2014) is about to graduate and needs your help! Our students are looking for ways to continue their vocations through work, service and educational opportunities. As HNGR alumni, you have had the chance to explore these options and learn from your decisions. If you are interested in passing some of this wisdom to the next generation, email the HNGR Program (hngr@wheaton.edu) with your responses to the following:

1. Name of your company, organization, school etc. where you are working, studying or volunteering
2. A brief description of the work your organization does or the program in which you are studying (2-3 sentences)
3. Positions that could be filled by recent HNGR graduates beginning this summer or fall
4. Your name, internship year, and contact information
5. Any additional comments you might have

Our alumni are our most valuable resource for our graduating students. Thank you for your time and willingness to take a small step towards helping our students!

New face at HNGR

It is our pleasure to announce the hire of Dr. James Huff, the newest member of the HNGR team! In the fall of 2013, the HNGR Program decided to expand its team from 5 members to 6, adding a visiting assistant professor position. This professor will teach HNGR introductory courses and supervise the internship course while students are in the field, in addition to other administrative duties here on campus.

James (Jamie) G. Huff Jr. received his Ph.D. in Cultural Anthropology from American University (Washington, DC) in 2004, and worked as Associate Professor of Anthropology at Vanguard University (2002-2014) prior to his faculty appointment to the Human Needs and Global Resources Program at Wheaton College. His teaching and scholarly interests focus on understanding the relationship among three particular domains of cultural and social experience – namely, religious change, community development and human flourishing. At the broadest level his scholarship explores the changing religious landscapes of contemporary Latin America, with a particular focus on the social and economic changes generated by the rapid growth of Pentecostal-charismatic forms of Christianity across the region. For the past decade he has regularly conducted ethnographic fieldwork in El Salvador where he has documented the involvement of Pentecostal churches in community-based efforts to alleviate rural poverty. As an applied anthropologist, Dr. Huff is especially interested in helping development organizations better evaluate the effectiveness of their efforts to sustain human flourishing. And since 2008 he has worked collaboratively with the staff of a Christian non-profit organization (ENLACE) to implement evaluation studies that assess the impact of local development initiatives on the social, economic and physical well-being of rural communities across El Salvador.

If he’s not hanging out in rural El Salvador, then you will most likely find him in the kitchen cooking up something good to eat for his wife, Rebecca, and his two daughters, Reyna (10) and Emily (8). And if he’s not in the kitchen, then you may find him coaching his daughters’ soccer team while daydreaming that he’s walking the pitch of Camp Nou, home of his favorite soccer club, FC Barcelona! And on all other occasions he most likely will be enjoying the latest Amos Lee or Avett Brothers album, and talking with Rebecca about next year’s home garden project.



Seeking Justice in Education

2011 HNGR intern, Adam Sawyer, discusses his journey to Teach for America and the hope he has found in bilingual education

What have you been doing since graduating from Wheaton?

Like many recent liberal arts graduates, I traveled out to Washington DC in the Fall of 2012 to look for work as a policy researcher. I spent the next year bouncing between different internships—from publications departments to refugee resettlement organizations—while working as a busboy at a pizza place. It was exhilarating to meet different kinds of people through work and home, but disillusioning to see the currents of competition and inequality surge through a city on a daily basis.

After a year in DC, I was accepted to Teach for America: Dallas-Fort-Worth and received an offer to teach at Clara Oliver Elementary in South Oak Cliff. In July of 2013, I moved to Texas to begin a career as a bilingual elementary teacher, teaching 11 students in a self-contained classroom.

Why did you decide to work through Teach for America?

The short answer to this question is that I found education to be an arena in which I could participate in justice-making in the United States. The disparity in educational opportunity among people of different social and racial demographics continues to be one of the pillars upholding structural injustice in the United States. I could have gone into health care or the criminal justice system. I guess it just seemed that education appeared more accessible for a recent liberal arts degree graduate.

As I applied for Teach for America, I recognized the criticisms and controversies the organization continues to face on the national scene. But I also felt that Teach for America was (and is) trying something new in an education system with extensive brokenness. As a white male, it can be difficult to know what justice-making looks like on a professional basis. Teaching provided a viable, if not imperfect, answer.

Working with Teach for America has offered me the



Adam Sawyer (HNGR 2011) is in his first year of teaching at Clara Oliver Elementary in Dallas, TX

opportunity to live and work in the most diverse community of my life to promote the opportunities of emerging bilingual students. They will be the leaders in a more equal and multilingual United States. I get excited about that.

What are some of the challenges your students face?

My students bring a lot of good stuff to the table. They are generous, compassionate, and intelligent. Their bilingual identity will serve them well. Their parents demonstrate incredible commitment to their education. It is the job of the instructor to have the cultural with-it-ness to harness these assets to propel students academically.

More than anything, my 2nd grade students face the pressure to catch up to their peers in English while retaining the Spanish of their parents. This has a cultural component to it as well. I am struggling to pinpoint where my students are on the cultural spectrum. I shouldn't assume everybody celebrates Cinco de Mayo, but to ignore it would be irresponsible to the cultural heritage that many parents

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treasure. My students are only beginning to realize the cultural flux they will be growing into as they grow older.

Beyond these challenges, I think the pressure and fear within the public school system in Dallas affects my students. Districts see achievement gaps in test scores and come down hard on principals, who then pass the pressure onto the teachers. It is easy to pass my anxieties onto my students. They can feel it intuitively when I'm stressed.

What have been some ways that your time with HNGR has influenced your life choices?

When I was in Honduras, I frequently had conversations with my host-father about politics and societal ills. One evening, we began discussing the topic of poverty in cities like New Orleans and Detroit. Despite my efforts, my host-father could not understand how the word "poor" could be used to describe anyone who lived in the United States.

In that moment, I realized that my level of acquaintance with poverty in the U.S. was so low that I could hardly bear any credibility in discussing it. That conversation led me to believe that I need to have some kind of understanding of poverty and injustice in the United States as I enter into partnership and friend-

ship with neighbors inside and outside the U.S. political borders. This little spiritual seed is a large part of the reason I committed to Teach for America for two years. I believe in the mutual transformation that Christ's work can make in people when we push through the trickiness of our differences in race, nationality, and class.

What are your goals for your next stage in life?

Perhaps to defy some of the criticisms directed toward Teach for America, I hope to continue my teaching career beyond the minimum two years. The skills and knowledge base that I am acquiring would just seem wasted to me if I walked away 15 months from now. Despite the need to persevere through a trying first year, I love teaching kids how to read, write, and do math.

Long term, I wish to re-enter the field of Land Tenure advocacy that supported my work with Asociación para una Sociedad más Justa en Honduras. The recognition of one's ownership of land is akin to recognition of one's existence in so many cases, and yet so many live in the cities and rural spaces of this world without certainty of knowing if they own their land. Si Dios lo permite, I hope that further school and further land tenure work outside the United States lies in my future.

Looking to hire or get hired? Check out Entravos.net

The International Development Studies department at Calvin has been developing a website called Entravos.net, which is designed to help graduates from programs like HNGR find entry-level positions and/or internships with Christian NGOs working in international development.

We imagine that our alumni will appreciate the site for both services it provides: job opportunities for those seeking employment and a place for organizations to post their job listings for young Christians to apply. We encourage you to use this as a resource in furthering your vocation and by inviting others to join the work that you are already doing.



Integrating sectors of society: NGOs and Government

Arnila Santoso, HNGR 2004, has worked with both NGOs and the US government... while managing to get a Masters degree. Arnila now lives in Washington DC.

What have you been doing since graduating from Wheaton?

Since graduating from Wheaton I've worked at two different NGOs, gotten my MA in International Conflict Resolution and started a career with the Department of State. I currently manage a portfolio on human rights issues in China.

Why did you decide to work with the State Department?

I decided to work with the State Department to gain experience doing government work. Working with NGOs made me realize that NGOs and government are both equally important when it comes to institutional change within a society, and I wanted to explore the government side of things since I had experience working with NGOs. This job has given me the chance to interface with a number of people that I wouldn't have access to if I worked at an NGO and to learn how to create partnerships between governments and NGOs that are sustainable and lead to social change.

What are some of the challenges you are working to address?

One of the benefits of working for the State Department is that we can take on a range of challenges that you can't at the NGO level because we have the resources and connections to do that. Right now I'm working on a number of institutional and social changes to improve the human rights situation in China that range from implementing rule of law reforms, to supporting the ability of Chinese civil society to address it's own challenges, and encouraging more religious freedom.

What have been some ways that your time with HNGR has influenced your life choices?

HNGR was instrumental in my continued interest in global issues. Regardless of what country I'm working in, HNGR taught me to have the courage to take on big challenges and always listen to the grassroots before acting.

What are your goals for your next stage in life?

I'm hoping I can do more to serve the poor right here in DC and invest more in my community. I've started to get more involved in that now that I'm realizing I may be here a while. That is something that HNGR instilled in me as well - the importance of investing in local community no matter where you are.

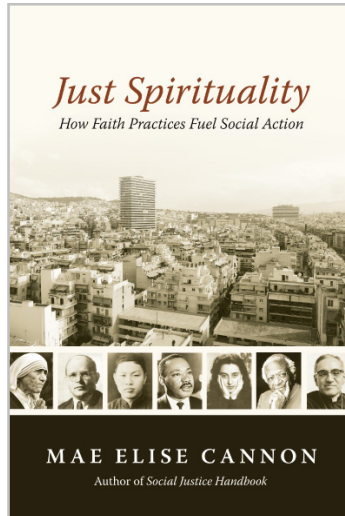
“*Just Spirituality* is a much-needed book written in an interesting and readable fashion about what can never be separated—Christian spirituality and the work of justice.”

-Richard Rohr

A Review of *Just Spirituality*

by Sydney McRay

While attending the IAPCHE conference at Calvin last spring, Ryan, Paul, and I came across a fresh new book by Mae Elise Cannon called *Just Spirituality: How Faith Practices Fuel Social Action*. As Richard Rohr wrote in his endorsement of the book, “*Just Spirituality* is a much-needed book written in an interesting and readable fashion about what can never be separated—Christian spirituality and the work of justice.”



Cannon uses biographical narratives of Christian leaders, both ancient and modern, in each of her chapters to introduce readers to how spiritual disciplines anchor us as we work for justice. Many of the leaders highlighted are familiar to our own HNGR interns and HNGR alumni as supervisors, advisory visitors, mentors or colleagues. People such as Sami Awad from Holy Land Trust, Bishop Dr. David Zac Niringiye in Kampala, along with Wheaton College Professors Dr. Gary Burge, Dr. Jim Wilhoit, Dr. John Walton and Professor Emeritus Dr. Gilbert Bilezikian.

In her introduction Cannon quotes Richard Foster regarding the strength of social justice tradition as “constantly calling us to a right ordering of society—right relationship and right living.” But Foster goes on to say that one of the risks of social justice may be “caring for social needs without reference to the condition of the heart.” This sets up Cannon’s ques-

tions about why is the condition of the heart or the cultivation of one’s soul important? What differentiates the engagement of the body of Christ from the justice-oriented action of other groups? How might we as Christian leaders and servants learn from those who have gone before us? And what we can do to be molded, shaped and transformed into the image of Christ? *Just Spirituality* is an attempt to respond to these questions by looking at examples of seven Christian leaders, their practice of spiritual disciplines, and how these practices deeply form our views of and responses to the world in which we live. The book inspires readers to see and connect how the spiritual lives of these leaders influenced their concern for the poor, their responses both personally and corporately to the oppressed and their activism to overturn unjust systems.

At first glance, Ms. Cannon’s writing may not seem as deep or reflective as Wolterstorff, Plantinga, Nouwen, Rohr or others widely read by HNGR alumni. However once you go deeper into the chapters, one

“*Just Spirituality* has been a really encouraging and challenging book to read. It has been really cool to look at social justice leaders that I love and respect and see what spiritual disciplines were important to them and how they were incorporated into their lives. It is a great reminder that these spiritual disciplines are important and that it is in God that social justice work is powerful. I have also loved that in each chapter, Mae Elise Cannon offers a variety of suggestions for ways we can incorporate these spiritual disciplines into our own lives. The suggestions are new and fresh and I have found them to be very beneficial.”

-Kirsten Rieck, 2014 Intern

“Just Spirituality is an incredible way to learn both the history of formative Christian leaders and to explore spiritual practices in an experiential and meaningful way. I have already recommended this book to so many friends and family members, whether they are preparing for a cross cultural experience such as HNGR, or they want to engage in spiritual disciplines in their daily life.”

-Kayla Slagter, 2014 Intern

will find that Cannon’s book is more of a narrative about the saints and leaders highlighted than it is of her own personal reflections. However, she does sprinkle in her own personal experiences and comments gingerly in each chapter. Her writing style is direct and the book is set up as more of a handbook and practical guide that lends itself well to personal spiritual practices, mentoring or small group discussion. It presents the case that the practice of disciplines—such as silence, prayer, study, community, worship, sabbath and submission—provide the fuel for Christians to make a difference.

It was not until I started using *Just Spirituality* as a mentoring book that I discovered its great potential and use in facilitating wonderful discussions and understanding it as a wonderful resource for developing personal spiritual practices. Each chapter ends with spiritual disciplines to practice that integrate with the content of the chapter. At the end of the book there is also a study guide for each chapter. This would be an excellent book for friends, family or people of your community who are interested in learning more about justice and how justice flows out of and is a response to the Gospel. Cannon writes:

Engagement in spiritual practices leads to Christ-centered action through works of justice such as service, discipleship and reconciliation. At the same time, justice-oriented action also leads back to reflection through spiritual practices such as silence, prayer and study. The correlation between

reflection and increased social action is not linear. Justice-oriented spirituality is a cyclical process in which social action leads people closer to God; similarly, spiritual disciplines compel people toward increased engagement in social action. The spiritual practices discussed are recursive disciplines that simultaneously draw people close to the heart of God through reflection and action.

Mae Elise Cannon is the senior director of advocacy and outreach in the Middle East for World Vision and the author of *Social Justice Handbook*. Ms. Cannon works with 2011 HNGR alum Craig Swandby at World Vision and is a friend of 2012 alum, Jared Noetzel.

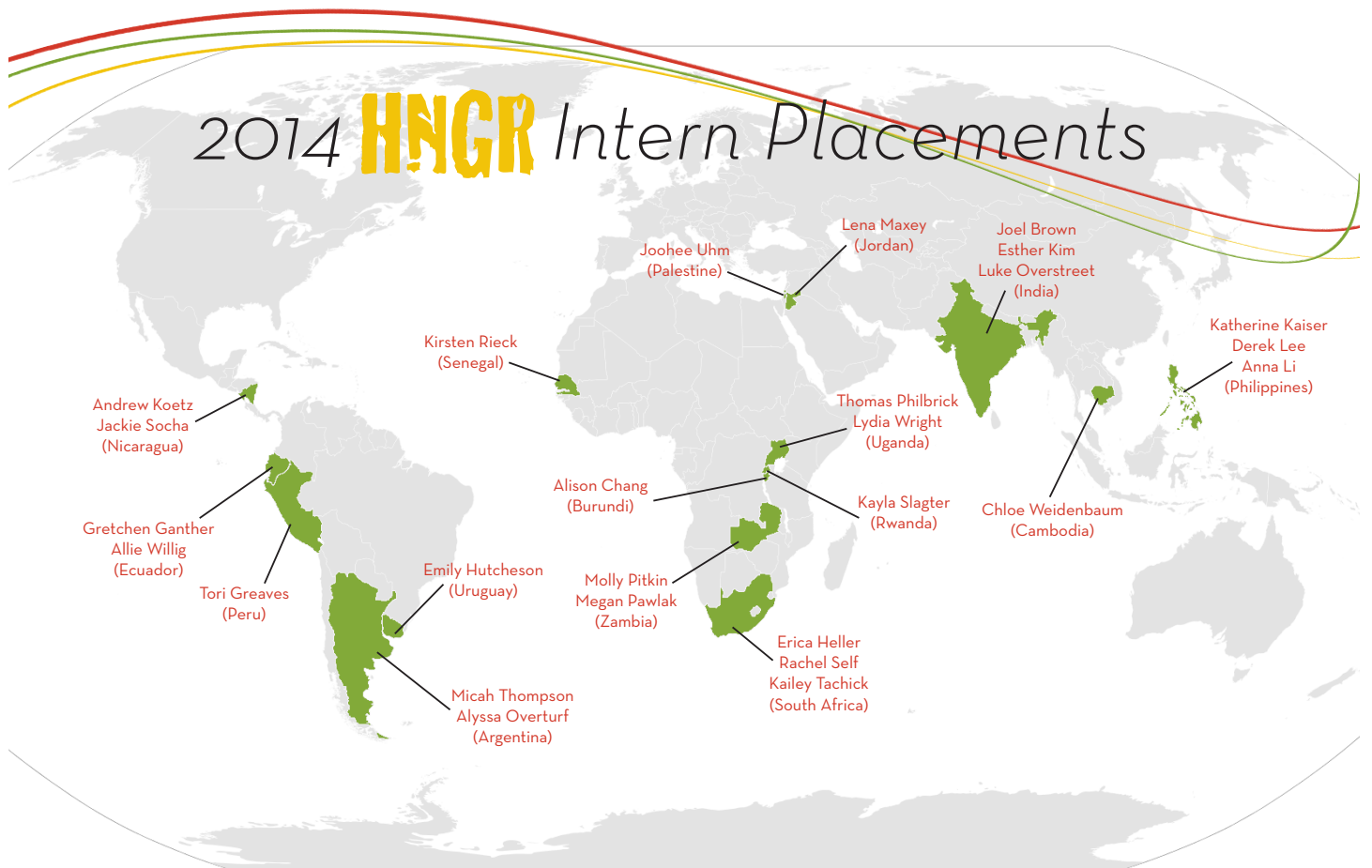
“I have only recently started the book, but I really loved what I’ve read so far about Mother Teresa and Sami Awad. It was incredible to see how their practices of silence and solitude are a source of peace and fortitude that allow them to minister outwardly with peace, assurance, and love. It is something that has challenged me a lot this year: to learn how to seek and find rest in the love of God, despite and for the tensions and occupations that confront me each day. And it is definitely a practice I hope to continue and deepen during my journey abroad.”

-Tori Greaves, 2014 Intern



2014 Intern Placements

Please join us in praying for these interns as they complete their internships around the world.



Student Name	Organization	Student Name	Organization
Joel Brown	Emmanuel Hospital Association	Megan Pawlak	Jubilee Centre
Alison Chang	Amani ya Juu	Thomas Philbrick	Joseph Initiative
Gretchen Ganther	Camp Hope	Molly Pitkin	Pro-Life Advancement and Education Programme
Tori Greaves	Paz y Esperanza	Kirsten Rieck	World Renew
Erica Heller	InnerCHANGE	Rachel Self	The Warehouse
Emily Hutcheson	CLAVES	Kayla Slagter	CARSA
Katherine Kaiser	Shiphrah Philippines	Jackie Socha	Luke Society
Esther Kim	Freeset	Kailey Tachick	dlalanathi
Andrew Koetz	Pueblos en Accion Comunitaria	Micah Thompson	Suyay
Derek Lee	Luke Society	Joohee Uhm	Holy Land Trust
Anna Li	Kalahan Education Foundation	Chloe Weidenbaum	World Relief
Lena Maxey	Operation Mercy Jordan	Allie Willig	Paz y Esperanza
Luke Overstreet	Emmanuel Hospital Association	Lydia Wright	Amani ya Juu
Alyssa Overturf	Comunidad y Cambio		