



### A Note from the Director

*After 13 years of service, Paul Robinson is retiring.*

So... most of HNGR's alumni will have heard this by now, but after 13 years leading this incredible program, I will be retiring from Wheaton and the HNGR Program at the end of December, 2012. These years have been filled with good things - students, host-partners around the world, rich conversations, the unanswered (and unanswerable) questions and the rooted hope of the Kingdom of God among us now and eternally.



No, this is not about a lot more snooze time or hanging out with grandkids (there aren't any of those yet anyway...) It is not about a rocking chair on a porch, it's not about fading away.



It is about new opportunities and challenges, and coming alongside Congolese friends and visionaries at the Congo Initiative and the Christian Bilingual University of Congo and making a difference in one of the poorest, most violent countries on earth, which is paradoxically also a place of deep joy, community and possibility. For the next couple of years, we'll be working from a base in the US to develop

the resources for this initiative. CI's projects are becoming a reality (UCBC held its second graduation last week), and the time is now to take it to the next level. Congo can be a place of life and healing!

In a couple of years, Margie and I hope to relocate to North Kivu, DR Congo, to teach, help develop faculty and curriculum, develop

partnerships. This is our calling, and this is what we are stepping out to do! We hope some of you might be a part of this in the years ahead! So, if you ever wanted my job... now is the time to apply.

Go to <https://www.wheaton.edu/about-wheaton/offices-and-services/human-resources/> for more information.



### Save the Date!

*October 6: HNGR Homecoming Open House 9-11 a.m.*  
*March 1-2: 2013 HNGR Symposium*

March 1: Returned interns' chapel, academic panels and plenary address  
March 2: Alumni celebration events



## Congratulations Christy!



This past May, one of our own HNGR staff, Christy Schweigert (HNGR '08), was married to Jeremiah Hillebrand (HNGR '09). Since the wedding, Christy says, "we had a great honeymoon on the West Coast and now I've been spending my time searching for jobs and getting settled in to married life here in Wisconsin." Christy, we miss you here in the office and wish you and your new husband the best in your life together. Thank you for the years of service you gave to the HNGR Program!

# Wheaton and HNGR at CLADE V

*CLADE, which stands for the Congress on Latin American Evangelization, is a conference hosted by the Latin American Theological Fellowship (FTL) for the purpose of discussing key theological and missional issues in Latin American church contexts. Held every ten years, the conference draws an interdisciplinary group of theologians, pastors, intellectuals and development workers from the whole hemisphere under the umbrella of "integral mission." This key characteristic of the CLADE movement emphasizes the church's integrated mission to her neighbors in word and deed, thus bridging the divide that has beleaguered North American Christians for decades. Over 25 Wheaton and HNGR alumni were able to participate as speakers, volunteers and attendees when the fifth CLADE met in Costa Rica in mid July under the banner "Following Jesus in God's Kingdom of Life: Guide Us, Holy Spirit!". We were able to catch up with a number of them for an inside perspective.*

### What was your involvement in CLADE V?

**Jenn Ruppelt (HNGR '10):** I was a volunteer.

**Remer Brinson (HNGR '10):** I had the opportunity to be a participant and a volunteer at CLADE V. As a participant, I was able to attend all the plenary addresses from FTL members from around Latin America and to participate in a 3 day small group session entitled, "Youth: the Protagonists for the Transformation." As a volunteer, I was able to help with all sorts of behind the scenes work before and after the major events. Honestly, getting to volunteer was just an awesome way for me to support a bunch of my Wheaton friends who had some serious responsibility for coordinating CLADE V.

**Rachel Beverage (Wheaton '11):** I had the privilege of spending the last year working with the General Secretary of the Latin American Theological Fellowship on preparations for CLADE V and providing support to the steering committee. During CLADE V, I served as the volunteer coordinator.

**Matt Coombs (HNGR '10):** I was a volunteer for CLADE V, so I was running around most of the time trying to figure out behind-the-scenes logistics, but I got to sit in on a couple of sessions.

**Ryan Juskus (HNGR Assistant Director, HNGR '04):** I attended CLADE V as a participant and also had the privilege of giving a talk on environmental ethics - particularly in response to an increase in mining projects in the region - in collaboration with the conference's breakout group focused on the ecological and social crisis in Latin America. I also had a chance to connect with many of our Latin American partner organizations.

### What was one highlight of the conference for you?

**Jenn:** The worship at the end of each day. There was such a profound feeling of joy and hope in the unity brought by worshipping to the sounds of salsa, huayno, and much more.

**Remer:** I had two major highlights. The first was getting to connect with and learn from a dozen or so missionally-minded, passionate, bright Latin American youth in my "Youth: the Protagonists for the Transformation" small group sessions. The second was getting to serve alongside so many incredible Wheaton (many HNGR) folks. It was powerful to see the way we were all integrating our faith, commitment to justice, and passion for the Latin American Church.

**Rachel:** The dancing. CLADE V was a time for serious discussion and theological reflection, but it was also a joyful celebration of God's Kingdom of Life. On Tuesday night, after the plenary, as the Latin rhythms began, the conference participants (and volunteers!) busted out dancing.

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**Matt:** Being able to meet pastors, theologians, and NGO leaders from so many different countries who came together with a similar purpose. Though they came from various backgrounds, the participants I met were eager to collaborate and work together to explore how they and their Church body back home can live out the gospel of Christ in their contexts.

**Ryan:** The fellowship among a diverse group of Latin American evangelicals. It was refreshing to participate in a “theological conference” that brought together sociologists and theologians, artists and pastors, environmentalists and evangelists, and men and women with a focus on being the church that gets to extend God’s love and blessing to her neighbors.

### What is one major issue that Latin American churches are facing and how are they responding?

**Remer:** Integral Mission is the heartbeat of the CLADE movement. Their churches are constantly seeking to integrate social justice and evangelism to care for the vulnerable, marginalized, and excluded in their communities. The whole conference was about how we live in light of the Kingdom in our own unique contexts, so though the issues varied the common call was to proclaim and seek the Kingdom of God.

**Rachel:** Most of the available resources for pastors and Christians are translations of English materials from the US. The most accessible are translations of Joel Osteen and other prosperity gospel preachers, which have had devastating effects on many very poor regions of Latin America. Latin American Christians have responded by starting small publishing houses and writing theological training materials and books. The Latin American Theological Fellowship

publishes several books a year that engage with the realities of the Latin American context.

**Matt:** From what I understand, one of the issues that Latin American churches are facing is discerning how to respond to the physical and social needs of their communities. Rather than simply focusing on the spiritual needs of those with whom they interact, many churches are pursuing a more holistic understanding of the gospel and attempting to equip their members to be agents of social change in their communities. Churches and NGOs are working together to serve the members in their community through a holistic gospel that seeks to respond to multiple needs within the community.

**Ryan:** I’m going to take Assistant Director’s license and highlight three issues that emerged as fields of Christian mission in the next decade: women, children and the environment. Women’s rights, wellbeing and leadership emerged as a leading issue and resulted in a statement<sup>1</sup> by CLADE V’s female participants. A focus on child wellbeing and the “good treatment” (buen trato) movement culminated in all participants being “vaccinated” against child maltreatment. Finally, environmental issues emerged as a key area of church mission in light of their integral relationship to social, political and indigenous health as manifested in a Calle 13 music video<sup>2</sup> that was shared by the Andean delegation.

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1. Available to read at [http://www.alcnoticias.net/interior.php?codigo\\_lang=22379\\_688](http://www.alcnoticias.net/interior.php?codigo_lang=22379_688)

2. Available to watch at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5mAZniR-IDQ>

## From the HNGR Reading List

*The Last Hunger Season* by Roger Thurow

In a global market that prefers large-scale agribusiness, *The Last Hunger Season* is a surprising look at the lives of smallholder farmers in Western Kenya. Roger Thurow, co-author of *ENOUGH: Why the World’s Poorest Starve in an Age of Plenty* and winner of the 2009 Action Against Hunger’s Humanitarian Award, offers the reader a chance to follow the lives of four Kenyan farmers for one year. Leonida, Raso, Francis and Zipporah each owns less than two acres of land and struggles to make their maize crop last from the *wekesa* (harvest) season all the way through the year and shorten the *wanjala* - the hunger season.

A former journalist with the *Wall Street Journal*, Thurow offers an intimate inside look at the day to day

struggles (and triumphs) of four poor farmers working to feed their families, pay their school fees and take care of their livestock. Thurow details, not only the challenges, but also the potential that these farmers have to respond to the global food crisis and bring their communities out of poverty. *The Last Hunger Season* gives outsiders an inside perspective on the paradox of despair and hope and teaches that each have their season.



## Don't forget about the HNGR Alumni Survey!

This year, the HNGR Program is conducting its ten-year review... and we need your input! If you did HNGR between 2000 and 2011 and received a survey via e-mail, please finish your survey by August 6th. We want to hear from you! To those who have already finished, thank you!

Wheaton was well represented at CLADE V with over 25 alumni in attendance, many of them HNGR alum.

### How would you challenge the North American church in light of CLADE V?

**Jenn:** I would challenge people to listen to what Latin American theologians are saying. I think the biggest challenge right now is establishing a conversation between the North and South.

**Remer:** I would love to see the North American Church open itself up to be influenced, taught, and transformed by the Latin American Church. The theology of integral mission would bring wonderful change to North American Churches, but we must be open, understanding, and humble to learn, listen, and change. The North American Church has so much to share with the Latin American Church as well, but so often I'm afraid we force ideas, structures, and mission on them, without pausing to ask questions.

**Rachel:** The church in the Global South has so much to offer the church in North America. The theologies and commitments of the Latin American Christians at CLADE V are radically relevant and challenging for North American Christians. We must actively seek to put ourselves in places where we can listen to people outside our own context.

**Matt:** Similar to the issue faced by Latin American churches, I would challenge the North American Church to pursue a more holistic understanding of the gospel that does not content itself with simply trying to meet the spiritual needs of their communities, but seeks to respond to social, emotional, and physical needs as well. We can categorize human needs in order to more fully understand them, but we should never allow ourselves to disregard the importance of a certain aspect of human needs and the Church's responsibility to be attuned to and respond to all of them. We need to reach out beyond the needs of our congregation and seek to serve those in our community in a manner that bursts with the compassion of Jesus Christ. Finally, I should make it clear that my use of "we" is not just a general use of the first-person plural, but a challenge to myself as well, because too often I segregate the needs of human beings and do not make an effort to respond to human needs in a holistic manner.

**Ryan:** I had opened my talk on Christian environmental ethics with an apology for my people's disregard for environmental issues that are already negatively impacting millions in Latin America. I then invited my fellow participants to help me and the North American church to imagine Christian ethics and values unchained from the destructive, anthropocentric worldview that far too much many of us possess in the

North. I noted that Latino values—hospitality, family, community—as well as indigenous communities' relational worldviews held promise for a way forward. After my talk, the first question I received was from a Brazilian who had worked with A Rocha Brazil, a Christian conservationist organization, and had just recently witnessed the failure of Rio+20 to commit to any major changes on environmental issues. He asked me, "How in the world is it that Christians in your country do not see the ecological crisis as an issue of deep Christian concern?" Basically, he wanted to know how North American Christians could justify environmental (and thus social) destruction in the name of Christ; or at the very least, why churches neglect to preach on creation care. My challenge would be to live out an answer to that question that draws from the deep well of biblical faith, hope and love, and does so by looking to our Southern neighbors for some largely-forgotten values and worldviews that could guide in Christ's kingdom of life.





# Back in Bolivia

## 2009 Intern, Emily Goldberg, returns to her HNGR site to use her gifts on a small scale

This fall, I heard about research grant money my graduate program had available- money that could include international travel. *My girls!*, I immediately thought. I had just returned from a visit back to the group home for teenage street girls where I had done my HNGR internship two years prior, and their faces and the needs of the home were strong on my mind and heart.

My deciding factor, when I was praying about whether or not to enter grad school, was the concept of stewardship. Though there are a million ways to serve, I knew there were specific needs that training in clinical psychology would allow me to meet. I chose to enter such a program in the hope that I could steward the gift of my education to contribute to God's work of bringing healing to His children. This grant and the chance to come back to this home in Bolivia to do research, to get to use my opportunities at school to work directly to help *my girls*, felt like the best thing I could imagine.

I remembered conversations I'd had with the Mosoj Yan staff. *Why do some girls do so well in our program* we would ask each other, *yet we couldn't reach that one*. We saw girls who have experienced trauma like something out of a horror film, demonstrated strength and care for others, and shown an ability to enter their adult lives with great fullness and joy. And yet we also saw girls who refused to be reached – girls who ran away from our safe home to the streets, who remained on drugs and sleeping with men who hit them. I began to see this research project as a chance to try to add information to that conversation.

Nine months later, I found myself in Cochabamba with the same amazing staff who loved my homesick self through my HNGR internship. Together, we gave sixteen pages of assessments to over twenty girls who have lived in or graduated from one of Mosoj Yan's homes. The girls diligently worked for hours through questions measuring all sorts of factors correlated with resilience: optimism, perceived social support, sense of control, stable adults in their lives, spirituality, and more. I was nervous, but the research time couldn't have gone better. I am praying we discover significant results that can help street kids and other children coming from traumatic backgrounds live the most full, joyful, healthy lives possible.

It's a sad fact that I am really bad at being globally aware. I am a love-the-person-in-front-of-me person, not a change-the-system person. I am inspired by my incredible friends who plan benefits, petition against unjust laws, and march to raise awareness about needs around the world. Me, I hear about someone who's having a hard time and want to give them a hug and take them out for coffee. Wheaton and HNGR have taught me much about the importance of understanding systems, and how much corrupt and unjust large-scale

problems affect individuals. I now deeply desire to work against the global injustices which hurt our brothers and sisters throughout the world. Still, 23 years of experience has taught me that, for better or worse, my ways of contributing will most likely always be on the micro-level. Thankfully, the HNGR office

worked with me as I am. While protecting and caring for girls who are victims of sexual abuse is absolutely a large-scale, systemic issue, my HNGR internship had plenty of need for me to use my micro-level gifts to my heart's content. For six months I hugged, read to, cooked with, disciplined, knit next to, and got to love on one small group of girls - just the way I like it.

Coming back for this visit, I was struck by how natural it felt to enter back into life with the staff and girls. I was received with great warmth and love, but little fanfare; it felt like I was just another member of this organization's community. They didn't pause in their work, they just immediately included me back into it. They are a home for me, they are part of my community, and, thank God, I theirs. I love them with all of my micro-level, small-scale heart, the same as I do the rest of my family and close friends.

I will never be good at thinking large-scale. But I can love my community with everything I have, with all my affection- and with all my opportunities, including my research in grad school. I am so grateful that HNGR gave me the privilege of having my community include a group of crazy teenage Bolivian girls and workers. And I am so humbled that somehow, their circles of community and love also include me.



Emily (standing) doing research "Bolivian style."



*We invite you to remember the 2012 HNGR interns in prayer during their six months away from Wheaton.*

