

ONEWORLD

Gonzaga University



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OneWorld 2010-2011

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Cover Photo by Stephanie Macdonald
Back Cover Photo by Hannah Johnson

Dear Readers,

Every year we witness the chaos and disorder within our world at home and abroad. Some crises are new, like the overthrow of Middle Eastern repressive regimes in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya, and some are continuing like access to basic health care in many countries around the world. In the past year alone, we have seen xenophobic rage leading to war, struggles with immigration, basic human rights denied, and a stronger link than ever between socioeconomic status and access to good education. Through all of this, what we can take home is the overarching realization that when one society, nation or culture struggles, we are all affected.

The articles, photos and stories before you aim to stir passion and curiosity to discover possibilities for peace while also presenting the realities of poverty, ignorance, injustice and hope. Our goal is to present new ideas and different cultures so that you, our readers, may come to recognize the importance of social change and, ultimately, the need for a common humanity. Take from the narratives and experiences that you find within the OneWorld Journal that interest you, raise awareness and advocate for social justice. As members of our Gonzaga and greater Jesuit solidarity network, we ask you to keep an open mind, absorb, and consider the topics presented in our journal. Take from the voices expressed within these pages, be inspired to make a difference and, above all, recognize that through greater awareness and understanding we are united in our efforts for peace.

Interested in writing?

We are looking for stories of social justice
that will inspire our community.

E-mail us at

oneworld@zagmail.gonzaga.edu



If you are planning for a year,
sow rice.

If you are planning for a decade,
plant trees.

If you are planning for a lifetime,
educate people.

--Chinese Proverb

Table of Contents

3	What Is Peace?
4	The Faces of Africa
6	Agano with Kenya
8	A Summer of Service: Cartagena, Colombia
10	The Issue of Rape
12	Dear Gonzaga
13	How Impossible Happens
14	Simply Us: A Journey of Accompaniment
18	One Common GOAL!
21	The Only Survivor of the Massacre at El Mozote
22	Being Present Is Enough
24	A Call for Global Solidarity
25	Unjust Justice: Why Reform is Needed in the Chinese Legal System
29	A New Middle East and a New World?

We are already one, but we imagine we are not. OneWorld exists to rediscover that while we are many in our cultures, religions, and struggles, we are one in our common humanity. We yearn to remove the barriers of ignorance and indifference because the most basic and unchanging truth that unites us is the infinite value of the human person. OneWorld emphasizes that unity by raising awareness of social injustice, inspiring action, and transforming our hearts, minds and society.



“We must remember that one determined person can make a significant difference, and that a small group of determined people can change the course of history”

-- Sonia Johnson

What Is Peace?

By Alanna Redine

A common definition of the word “peace” is a lack of fighting, arguments, and war. We hear about peace in Iraq, peace in Sudan, and often about the ways people believe peace will come through military intervention, government interference, or just in the coming years. But is this truly what defines peace? Shouldn’t peace mean more to us than just a word that we hear on the news about restoring far-off lands and ending wars that we are so disconnected from? Can’t peace be integrated into each and every aspect of our lives? I believe it can be.

So, how do we achieve peace? How do we begin to understand the complexity of this word? I began by defining it. I asked myself, What is peace? Originally, I thought of the wars and distant conflicts that we have been trained to associate with peace. But then I began to think of other meanings of the word—the ones that are frequently overlooked in our modern, pessimistic, world—and it opened my eyes to the numerous ways that peace can be embodied.

For me, peace is more than the cessation of war and fighting. Peace is the cessation of violence in our homes and on our streets. Peace is an open field; it is devoid of smog and the scars that humankind has left on the planet. Peace is a day without homework. Peace is children playing without their parents living in fear of their children’s abduction. Peace is being able to sit at home and read, having finally cleaned the house. Peace is the ability of humankind to achieve its loftiest dreams. Peace is finding what you love to do, and doing it.

Not all examples of peace are attainable today. Some of them will take generations of work. But there are some things on this list that we can achieve now. Most importantly, however, peace is an individual perception. What peace means to one may not be what it means to another. This creates infinite possibilities for how we can define and create peacefulness in our everyday lives. I therefore urge you to think of what peace means to you, and I urge you to begin to live your ideas of peace, as Ghandi said, “You must be the change you wish to see in the world.” Through social justice, each of us can do just that. Everyone can find what matters to him or her, and begin to make a difference in whatever way he or she can. With justice comes serenity.

Peace is everywhere; we need only create it.



The Faces of Africa

By Nolan Grady

I have seen the faces of Africa.

I watched a three-year-old child on his own will go to do laundry.

I have seen the faces of Africa.

I watched another three-year-old fall over drunk.

I have seen the faces of Africa.

I heard the story of a woman who achieved a grade 12 education and plans to do more.

I have seen the faces of Africa.

That same woman had her education paid for by her sister, who went into prostitution in order to do it.

I have seen the faces of Africa.

I hear myself saying TGIF everyday, not because it is the weekend, but because a child named Friday is there waiting for me.

I have seen the faces of Africa.

I have seen a man Christopher walk kilometers to come to class despite barely being able to move because he "craves to know."

I have seen the faces of Africa.

I heard the story of Josephine, who years before her time, fought for gender equality and became a political leader.

I have seen the faces of Africa.

I taught a man who walked eight hours just to come to our leadership and business class, and another who biked over 100 kilometers.

I have seen the faces of Africa.

I have lived in Zambezi for almost three weeks now and have felt myself become a part of a loving community that will continually hold a special place in my heart.

I have seen the faces of Africa.

*This is a blog post I wrote during my last day in Zambezi, Zambia
with the Gonzaga-in-Zambezi program*

Our time here in Zambezi is coming to a close; we are leaving as I write this. None of us knew exactly what to expect and despite all the preparation done, nothing could prepare us for it. We have all had an incredible experience in very different forms.

The Jesuits often speak of a three-step process: Experience. Reflect. Act. We all have had a very powerful experience here. We have reflected as it has happened both as a group and individually. It is a process that will continue to unfold in our minds and our hearts for a long time, as it should. It takes much to discern what these experiences will be, and we have begun that process, and will continue it. Reflection is not enough though. What remains to be seen is how we act. An experience is not the moment or the memory, but rather what you do with it. To leave Zambezi unchanged would mean we have not truly experienced, which is impossible to do in this place. Africa, and for us, Zambezi, has an incredibility to transform us all in so many ways. It may be realizing that you can connect to a person on the opposite side of the globe. It may be the difference you can make for an individual by just holding their hand. It may be any number of things, but for everyone, it is something.

I have seen the faces of Africa. But more than that, I have felt the heart of Africa. I have felt the

warmth of a child's hand in mine. I have felt the care of the people of Dipalata giving us more food than we can eat. I have seen the passion of community leaders in my leadership and business class to fix the problems in their community. Those are only a few small beats of the huge heart we have been blessed to feel.

We came here hoping to help the people of Zambezi. Hopefully, we made a small impact somewhere along the way. However, it is ironic that we, along with so many others, came to Africa hoping to fix the problems here. But we leave Africa having it fix us. Our experience here has offered us a transformative opportunity. Ultimately, what we do with that opportunity is our responsibility. So many people speak of the plight of Africa. The message we have to send is the power of Africa. It is a force with transformative ability. The people here are far more capable than we are to fix their issues. And ultimately, they will. They do not need us, but rather it is our privilege to be with them. They can change you in ways you will not imagine. We have seen the faces of Africa and felt their hearts, and vicariously, maybe you have too. But I challenge you to see the faces for yourself and feel their hearts. Only then, will our experiences here be fully explainable. Only then, will you feel the power of Africa, and only then will you too feel your heart mend.





Agano with Kenya

By Julia Biemann

“Agano” means covenant or pact in Swahili.

Agano with Kenya is a remarkable organization whose mission is to commit to a ten-year reciprocal agreement with orphaned college aged girls. By the end of ten years the orphans will have garnered a college diploma, participated in a year long internship in her field, become successfully employed and have a savings account. She will then reciprocate by volunteering in her community, mentoring junior participants in the Agano with Kenya program, and will have given 10% of her earnings to the program. Ultimately the organization will move all its operations to Kenya. It is a true ‘pay it forward’ process with the goal being a self-sustaining, non-profit organization based in Kenya, for Kenyans and run by Kenyans.

I have been fortunate to be involved in the formative stages of Agano with Kenya. Our good family friend Jene Meece is the driving force behind the program. Through Jene I have come to know Father Henry Simaro, who runs the Kenyan operations for Agano with Kenya, and overseas five hundred orphans and vulnerable children. Fr. Henry was rescued as a child from the streets of Eldorat, Kenya and educated by missionaries. He currently operates Mount Olive Academy in Kenya, and three other schools that educate over five hundred children.

Jene was inspired to found Agano with Kenya by Betty Jumo, a young Kenyan woman. Through Fr. Henry, Jene sponsored Betty’s high school education but was anxious at the thought of what would become of Betty upon high school graduation. Betty’s story is one of sadness and great hope.

In 2003, Betty’s mother was unable to leave the hospital after the caesarian delivery of Betty’s fifth sibling. In Kenya, if you cannot pay your hospital bill of one dollar a day then you will not be discharged. Fr. Henry paid the \$102 when he was told of the situation in the town adjacent to the one where Mount Olive Academy is located. Father Henry rescued Betty’s mother whose incisions were by then infected. He helped nurse the Muslim woman to health and set her up in a microfinance business. She began selling vegetables so she could feed her family. Unfortunately, Betty’s mother died a few years later, leaving 5 orphaned children.

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Now, through Agano with Kenya, Bety not only has a chance of changing her own life but also has the chance to participate in a program that will change the face of Kenya

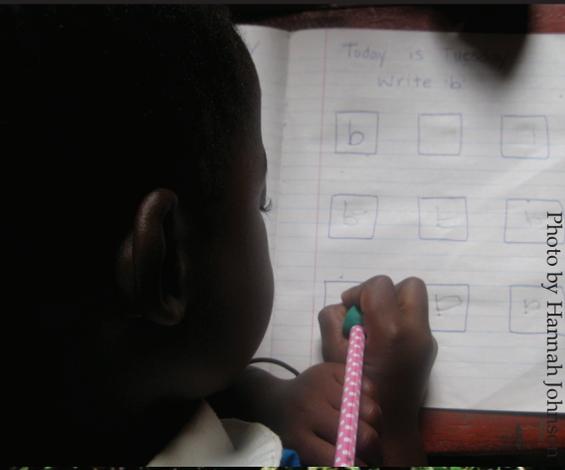
Betty was the oldest child of this woman and Father Henry noted Betty’s bright eyes and determination. He offered Betty the opportunity to learn and receive a high school education with hopes of changing her and her family’s life. Now, through Agano with Kenya, Betty not only has a chance of changing her own life but also the chance to participate in a program that will change the face of Kenya.

Betty is going to be part of the new generation that will change the face of Kenya for three reasons: First, she was rescued from abject poverty. Second, she was sponsored through high school and encouraged by people who believe in her and third, she will be one of the first groups of girls to partner with Agano with Kenya for ten years of support and coaching so that when she is 28 years old she will be in a professional career and will have the tools to support others behind her.

If you are one of the 1.2 million children orphaned by AIDS in Kenya, your plight is especially tough. There is no family on which to fall back. The government agency HELB (Higher Education Loans Board) was created to offer loans to the poor of Kenya, but even these loans only pay 40 – 70% of tuition costs. The girls

whom Agano with Kenya will partner with are orphans and penniless, yet they represent the cream of the crop in Kenya because they have passed rigorous exams in a highly competitive environment that allows them entrance into college. They have risen to the top without parents. They truly are an inspiration.

Agano with Kenya has created an organization that will begin a process that allows the vulnerable children of today to be the leaders of Kenya tomorrow. If you would like more information please contact Jene.Meece@AganowithKenya.org



A Summer of Service: Cartagena, Colombia

By Bri Badili

When most think of Colombia, fear and misconception often accompany the thought. A common goal to help the impoverished population brought Kristina Wick, Nick Contreras, and Patrick Hoversten, together in Cartagena, Colombia for two weeks of their summer vacation.

Although their hopes to change Colombia brought them together, Nick, Kristina and Patrick initially traveled to the country for different reasons. Nick, a Colombian native, moved to the United States when he was 10 years old. He was inspired to travel to his native country to help those living in turmoil he witnessed as he grew up.

"During my childhood, I grew up in a well-off family, beside people who were struggling to stay alive. Poverty and violence was a reality that many people faced in Colombia," said Nick. "I felt so fortunate for the opportunities that I had been given, and this summer I decided [it] would be the perfect time to give [back] to those who were not as fortunate."

Kristina moved to Cartagena from California halfway through middle school and finished her high school education there while her parents aided in consulting many local foundations and organizations. The summer had called her back home for an internship opportunity catering to her interest in the field of business. Volunteering in Colombia was nothing new to Kristina, but the enriching relationships she developed and experiences she shared with Nick and Patrick were wonderful new experiences. She was proud to be a part of this trip to Colombia.

"Although my summer was different from Nick's and Pat's, since my internship was full time, I still feel like it had a great impact on me because of their attitudes and emotional connection with the people," said Kristina.

Patrick had been out of the country only a few times before and was looking for a meaningful way to spend his summer, while growing as a person. His friendships with Kristina and Nick offered an opportunity to do just that.

Never having visited a third-world country, Patrick really wasn't sure what to expect.

"The Spanish 101 class that I took at Gonzaga taught me colors and numbers, but how was that supposed to help me communicate with the people? I was nervous, [but] compared to my mother, I was cool as a cucumber," said Patrick. "She kept giving me warnings about common techniques used for kidnapping Americans in Latin America, and how to avoid them".

As Americans, and Gonzaga students, we are so fortunate with the love we have from families, friends, schools, and organizations

After talking about the trip and sharing their separate goals, they realized they shared a vision and were going to have a great time while implementing their visions in the impoverished country. Kristina's family had a house in the city, and access to foundations, Nick had family, while Patrick brought a fresh perspective and willingness to help.

"We fed off each other's enthusiasm," said Kristina. "Hearing Nick and Pat's stories of the experiences they had, made me want to get more involved!"

The three took part in many activities in which they really tried to learn about the culture, put smiles on Colombian faces, and make a change. It was not quite the typical leisurely summer vacation many college students would vote for, but for them it had a purpose. It was hard work, but fulfilling and an experience of a lifetime.

"I was looking for a summer experience that would allow me [to] grow as a person," said Patrick. "I wanted to go to some part of the world that was beautiful, had a lot of culture, and had a need for my service".

Nick and Patrick, who are on the Pre-med track at Gonzaga, got the chance to dive into their field a bit earlier than most pre-med students from the U.S. They were able to aid in a delivery room at the only free maternity clinic in the state. At this clinic, over 1500 babies are born per month. Colombians firmly believe in

It was not quite the typical leisurely summer vacation many college students would vote for; but for them it had purpose

hands-on experience and are trained from the very beginning of their medical career with real lives on the line.

“During my first two weeks there, I was a medical student working 12-hour days in a children’s hospital and maternity clinic; I participated in surgeries and helped deliver babies,” Nick said. “My hands were covered in blood, as the doctor told me to hold two sutures together, I always dreamed that I would be performing surgeries, but never before I assisted medical school.”

Another activity the three were able to experience was participating in an outreach organization called Actuar Por Bolivar. This organization gives micro-credit loans to impoverished families to aid in breaking the cycle of poverty . Actuar Por Bolivar has had immense success in the loans they provide and are gradually improving the lives of many.

Kristina, Patrick, and Nick visited a displaced neighborhood and were able to see first-handedly the progress Actuar Por Bolivar was making in the poverty stricken neighborhoods.

“We met with the beneficiaries of the organization’s loans and learned how significant of an impact a little amount of money and responsibility can have on an entire community’s condition,” said Nick and Patrick.

In addition to that, the three went with an organization called Arriba Las Manos to an island 10 miles off the coast of Cartagena called Ararca.

“We gave small talks and had group activities to help educate the children on values that they could use to break the cycle of poverty,” said Nick.

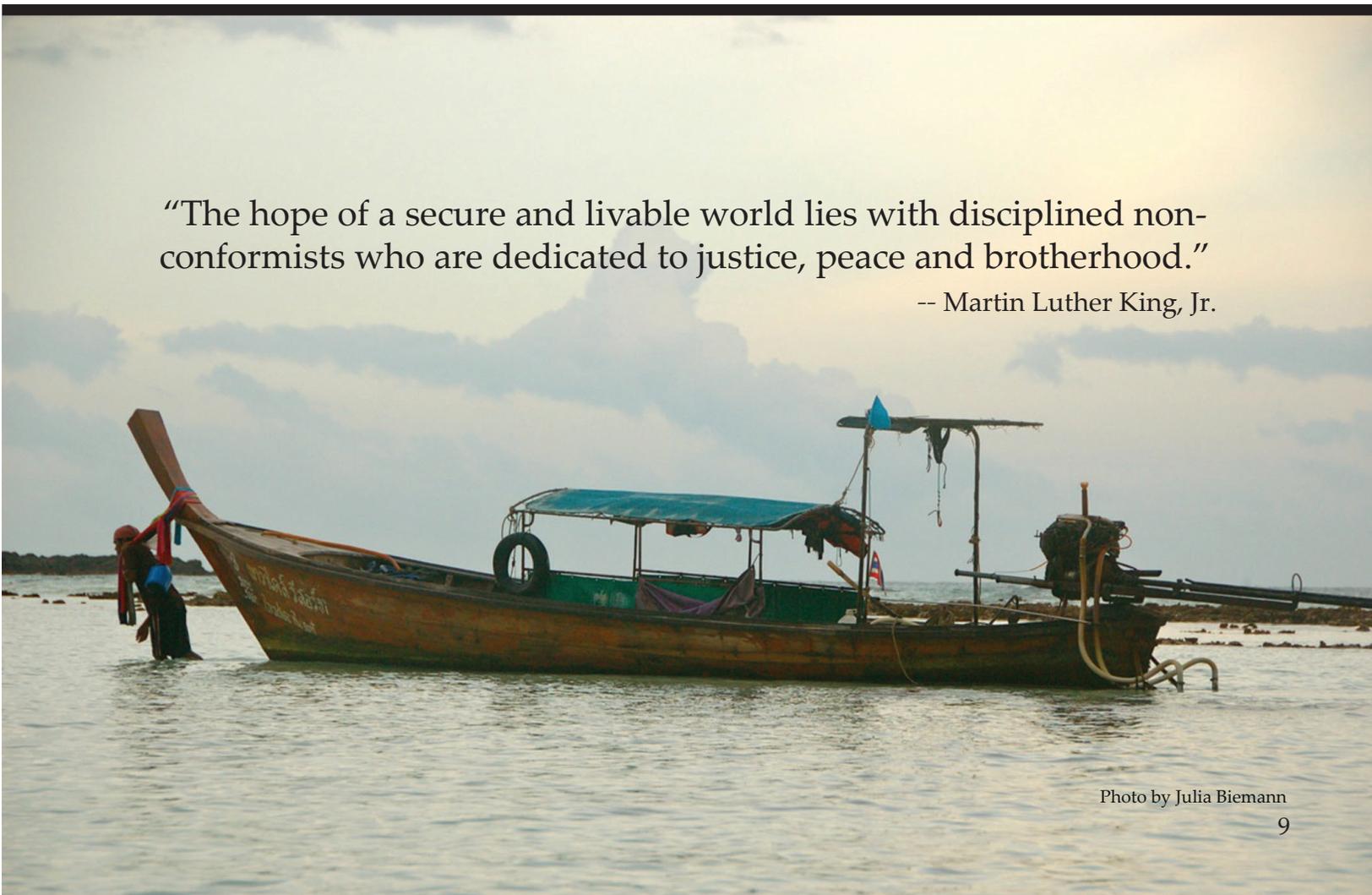
Kristina, Patrick, and Nick were not only able to instill change in a country crippled by adversity and poverty, but they also gained rich experiences that they continue to reflect upon.

“As Americans, and Gonzaga students, we are so fortunate with the love we have from families, friends, schools, and organizations. Going to a third world country really helps to evaluate what we have and what we take for granted. It is like a breath of fresh air getting away from the hustle and bustle. This summer was probably one of the best summers I have ever had,” said Kristina.

If you are looking for an amazing summer experience please visit www.friendsforcolombia.org or contact Kristina, Patrick or Nick. They would be more than happy to aid you in the right direction to an unforgettable summer.

“The hope of a secure and livable world lies with disciplined non-conformists who are dedicated to justice, peace and brotherhood.”

-- Martin Luther King, Jr.



Educate Yourself

Education is the catalyst for change. Take from the following resources, learn from the ideas presented, and share your thoughts for a brighter future.

Local and international service outlets

Global Citizens for Change
www.citizens4change.com

National Coalition for the Homeless
www.nationalhomeless.org

Discover Fair Trade
www.discoverfairtrade.org

Cabbages and Condoms
www.cabbagesandcondoms.com

Green Peace
www.greenpeace.org

Roll Back Malaria
www.rollbackmalaria.org

Catholic Worker Movement
www.catholicworker.org

The Rosetta Project
rosettaproject.org

Books to change your perspective and inspire

Stones into Schools
by Greg Mortenson

Strength in What Remains
by Tracy Kidder

What Is The What
by Dave Eggers

In The Time of the Butterflies
by Julia Alvarez

The Book Thief
by Markus Zusak

In Spite of the Gods
by Edward Luce

The Black Jacobins
by C.L.R. James

Hopes and Prospects
by Noam Chomsky

The Issue of Rape

By DJ Moxley

The issue of rape is one that has been around since the beginning of time. However, only in the past few hundred years has the issue really been publicized in the general public. Rape is a growing problem worldwide and it has some very surprising and disturbing statistics. One country where rape, and a response to it are extremely prevalent, is South Africa.

Rape is especially prevalent in South Africa because of joblessness and poverty; a large portion of the men do not have access to a stable job and, more often than not, this leads to increased stress and crime. A recent study in South Africa showed that one in four men have admitted to rape, and nearly half of those men have done it more than once. These statistics are extremely horrifying and are unacceptable. However, the FBI estimates that only about 37% of all rape cases are reported.

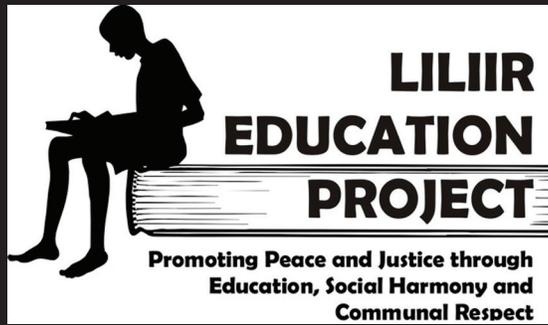


Photo by Stephanie Macdonald

Though rape is extremely prevalent in South America, it is a worldwide issue that demands the attention of world leaders and justice organizations. Countries such as Australia, Canada, Jamaica, and the United States are all in the top 10 countries of rape per capita. More effort needs to be done to educate the public about rape and how to prevent it in these countries as well as South Africa.

In response to these troubling statistics, Dr. Sonnet Ehlers has invented an anti-rape condom. These new anti-rape devices can only be inserted and removed by a doctor. Inside the condom, spikes are attached to cause pain to the unwanted male and once the male is inside of it, it will attach to him and it will only be able to be removed by a doctor, incriminating him.

While these devices do not prevent rape, they act as a deterrent to potential rapists. Dr. Ehlers gave them out to women for free at the World Cup and is now selling them for \$2 each. Though these devices won't stop the crime of rape entirely, it is an inspiring start in response to this social injustice.



Dear Gonzaga Alumni, Professors, and Students

By John Jok Nhial

I expect to pass through life but once. If therefore, there be any kindness I can show, or any good thing I can do to any fellow being, let me do it now, and not defer or neglect it, as I shall not pass this way again." -- William Penn



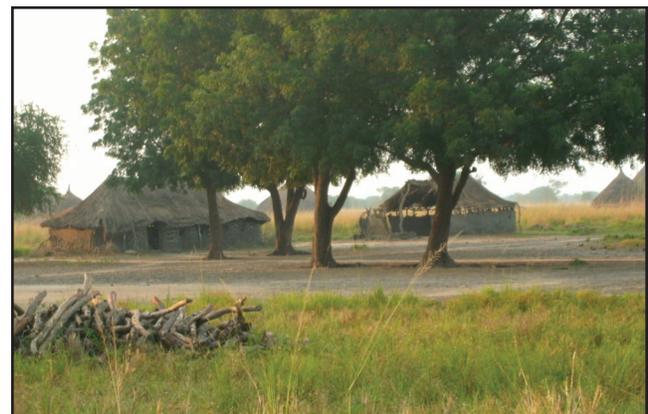
I am writing you, my fellow Zags, on behalf of The Liliir Education Project ("LEP"). The Liliir Education Project is a 501(C) (3) public charity that I started after graduating from Gonzaga in 2008. The mission of the LEP is to provide basic educational opportunities for students in Southern Sudan. Currently, children meet outside, oftentimes with a "teacher" that has not gone to a secondary school, without books, in what are called "under-tree classrooms." The Liliir Education Project is in the beginning stages of constructing a school, acquiring books and supplies and providing college scholarships to students who, upon graduation, will be required to teach in Southern Sudan. Ultimately, our goal is to put an end to these "under-tree classrooms" that constantly thwart education.

As the graduate of a Jesuit University and the only individual in my family with a college degree, I understand the value of education. After suffering through half a century of violence, my people need help now more than ever. Over two decades ago, due to a mass genocidal campaign that targeted young boys, I fled Southern Sudan; one of thousands identified as "Lost Boys." Families and countryside were devastated. As a result of this civil war that lasted 50 years, one of the bloodiest the world has ever seen, nearly three million people were killed and over four million people became refugees. Now, Southern Sudan is one of the poorest and most underdeveloped areas of the world, with the highest illiteracy rate. A full 76% of men and 95% of women in Southern Sudan are illiterate. The scarcity of educational facilities has resulted in only 2% of boys and less than 1% of girls finishing primary education each year. Only 7% of teachers in Southern Sudan have formal training. Due to limited access to schools throughout the region, school aged children are forced into child labor and bondage. The schools that are available are in dire need of basic structures and resources. The war has finally ended. It is time to rebuild these devastated people who have suffered so much.

Currently, The Liliir Project is starting the "Campaign to End Under-Tree Classrooms," that will help us in our goal to build and supply an entire school.

www.liliireducationproject.org

Photos by Jok Nhial



How Impossible Happens

By Michaela Bromfield

Joining a club on Gonzaga's campus last year opened my eyes to the power of the human spirit. Not only was my global perspective broadened, but I became aware of how compassionate and concerned people can be while others can commit malicious acts of violence. I became drawn to topics I never previously knew about. The International Justice Mission chapter at Gonzaga (IJM) is the club that helped me think more critically about others, and how what seems like impossible aspirations, can be accomplished.

The International Justice Mission is a Christian non-profit that works in countries plagued with violent oppression of its people. IJM employs lawyers, doctors, and aftercare professionals in countries such as Uganda, Kenya, Guatemala, and Cambodia where crimes against humanity are all too common. When I read personal testimonies of IJM's work, I was struck by one story in particular. A young boy who was living in desolate poverty was offered better wages for his work in the city. He decided to go because his family needed money. Once he arrived, he was forced to labor in a rice

Hope lies in the fact that there are organizations like IJM that work to defend those who cannot defend themselves

mill for no wages, and was kept there against his will. IJM officials worked with local police to free dozens of people from this terrible act of violence and injustice.

Not only does IJM work with victims of forced slave labor, but also with young women who are

sold into forced prostitution. It takes months if not longer for IJM workers to collaborate with local officials and police to stake out a prostitution house. Once they do, it takes even more energy and effort to survey the place and plan a raid to free the women forced to work and live in deplorable conditions.

I couldn't ever imagine living my life constantly in fear, or having my livelihood and dignity taken from me. That's why I see the work IJM does as making impossible things happen. Their work frees young men, women and even whole families from a life of despair then brings their perpetrators to justice. This takes understanding the local legal system as well as collaboration with officials to make sure these oppressors are locked up in jail.

I'm sure that millions of Americans are astonished at what goes on in our world; like slave child labor, unlawful seizure of property, forced prostitution, and feel helpless in fighting these injustices. The hope lies in the fact that there are organizations like IJM that work to defend those who cannot defend themselves. As a Christian I know that this is what Jesus calls us to do; to stand up for the weak and defenseless and to fight against injustice present in our world. Sometimes that idea is so big it can be paralyzing. The good news is that IJM is an organization that puts these Christian practices to work. They make the impossible happen, and we all can too. I found my place being an active member of our campus chapter of the International Justice Mission. Where is your place?

To learn more please visit www.ijm.org or www.gonzaga.edu/community to join Gonzaga's chapter.

"As we serve individual victims of abuse, we want to see the systems they depend on for protection and justice work for all people, all the time."

-- Jean Litton,
IJM Vice President of Field Operations

Simply Us: A Journey of Accompaniment

By Lucas Sharma

*We Are Called to Act with Justice
We Are Called to Love Tenderly
We Are Called to Serve One Another, to Walk Humbly With God
Micah 6:8*

The mission of Gonzaga University calls us to work with Christ in “loving service of the human community.” Gonzaga’s ambition is to instill a thirst for justice not only in our minds, but in our hearts that is sustaining as we walk humbly throughout our post-Gonzaga journey. Indeed, I believe that reflecting on my own social justice journey has left me with a deeper thirst for justice, and commitment to my own walk with God and with others.

Throughout my journey at Gonzaga, I have learned a form of service that emphasizes accompaniment. Aaron Ausland, author of the article “Staying for Tea”, reflects on his own journey of accompaniment from his service experience in Bolivia. In this model of accompaniment, we strive not just to serve the poor, but rather, to walk with them, to become, as Aaron Ausland writes, mutually indebted (Ausland 2010:15). When we become mutually indebted, we realize that those we serve have just as much (if not more) to

give us than we give them. We realize that we aren’t heroes in our service, but rather, together we are faithful servants walking with Christ.

Prior to senior year, I had numerous opportunities to observe the ways others practice accompaniment, teaching me how I too can accompany others. As a student leader my senior year, I had the opportunity to travel to East Los Angeles with the Comprehensive Leadership Program for Spring Break. This time, I was ready to accompany the community of Boyle Heights. Accompaniment was our primary purpose, as we were invited into the homes of residents in the community to both partake in meals and join their faith sharing groups. Together, we opened the Gospel of Luke and shared our reflections, in both Spanish and English. In these moments, we were simply present. When we shared of the Gospel, we learned what it meant to be mutually indebted. I think the women of Boyle Heights understood accompaniment in their hearts and so authentically gave us one of the most genuine examples I have ever experienced.

Accompanying others involves repositioning ourselves, and it challenges who we are as men and women for others. Nowhere did I understand this more than during my first year after graduating from Gonzaga. When I entered the Jesuit Volunteer Corps and served in Washington, D.C., I started to reposition myself. My work at Bread for the City, a nonprofit providing social services including legal assistance, repositioned me from academics into the lives of the American underclass. Suddenly, my training as a sociologist and economist faced reality when I began to talk with residents of the District. Each person was a living example of a system of deep inequalities, of systemic and structural barriers to equal opportunity, and of oppression and disadvantage in a racialized society. In his service experience, Ausland slowly watched his title erode as he became real to them. With my closest clients, I too watched that title slowly erode. Perhaps, we as professionals grapple with the fact that we are entrusted with power that is withheld from our clients. This becomes frighteningly clear in American services for low income people, where, because of our system of disadvantage, they are forced to hope that an organization like Bread for the City will be present in their city. Far too often, those living without the luxury of a safety net, can suddenly be faced with unemployment, inability to pay rent, and then being sued by their landlord for eviction. Then they will be forced to hope that an attorney will take their case in landlord-tenant court pro bono. It is a broken system that results in the deep underclass we see in our major urban centers today.

It was with my clients at Bread for the City that I truly understood and lived accompaniment.

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We realize that we aren’t heroes in our service, but rather, together we are faithful servants walking with Christ

Accompanying others involves repositioning ourselves, and it challenges who we are as men and women for others

In the moments with Ms. N, a client struggling with deep depression, chronic debilitating pain, and a list of other ailments, she would offer to pray for me. Mr. K too, told me that he would pray for me as I enjoyed the luxury of being able to travel back to Washington State for Christmas. And I watched Mr. J become deeply vulnerable with me as he shared of his struggles with depression. I felt myself walking with Mr. K, Ms. N, and Mr J as our paths became one and we walked together at Bread for the City.

Fr. Greg Boyle of East Los Angeles says this is what we are striving for in our journeys as servants – to become no longer us and them, but simply us (2010). When our paths become one, when we remember we belong to each other, and when the separations of inequality and deep societal oppression seem to stop for a moment, we realize that we are simply us. We have repositioned ourselves, and we cannot return to the former life we knew; for our hearts are changed by this encounter, and with this, we radically dismiss the concept of Other. Mr. J is not other, but rather, he is part of my journey and part of who I am now. He is no longer part of them, but we are us.

When JVC ended, I realized my position had eroded, I had repositioned myself in society, and there was simply us. At the end of Luke’s Gospel, two disciples are on the road to Emmaus, journeying in desolation for their beloved Jesus has been killed. They begin walking with Jesus, though they do not know it is him, and their hearts begin to burn with passion as they walk with him. They accompany one another and share a meal together. When he breaks bread together with them, they realize it is Jesus and exclaim, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road?” (Luke 24:32).

Looking back on my year as a Jesuit Volunteer, I realize through the desolation of injustice that our clients face day by day, I too was often tempted to despair. Yet, in accompanying Ms. N, I began to feel my own heart burn, just like the disciples on the walk to Emmaus. God’s presence in our walk together continues to fuel that thirst for justice I originally deepened at Gonzaga. Yes, this is the vision of Christ Gonzaga asks us to find. A vision that suspends our judgment and sees us accompanying one another and becoming simply us. That is a true vision of social justice that I see so clearly now.

When our paths become one, when we remember we belong to each other, and when the separations of inequality and deep societal oppression seem to stop for a moment, we realize that we are simply us

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While this term initially sounds condescending, the term “underclass” refers to Gilbert’s (2008) understanding of the United States social class. Rather than the typical class structure we understand to be upper, middle, and lower class, Gilbert actually specifies that there are six distinct classes. The underclass is the lowest class, representing individuals who are 12% of the population and who are trapped in a cycle of poverty. It is a more analytically useful and descriptive term for understanding the deep poverty of this group in society.



Your World

"My purpose is to increase the bond between people and the group through my unknown personality. This way we create an army of volunteers."

-- Wael Ghonim, discovered leader of the Egyption Revolution on his most powerful tool (the web)

Photo by Melanie Kondrat

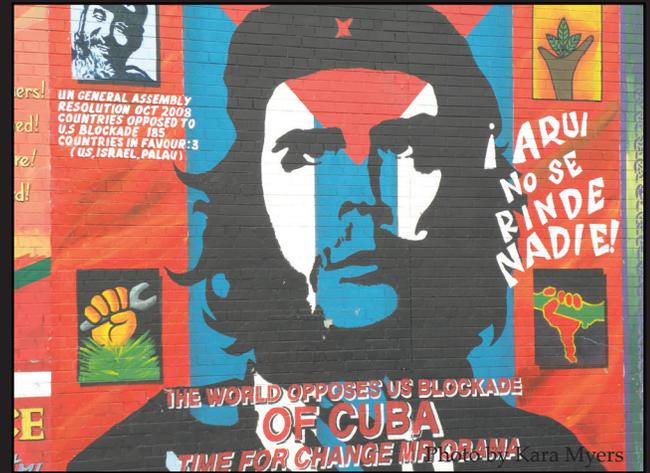


Photo by Kara Myers

"David Kato's death is a tragic loss to the human rights community. David had faced the increased threats to Ugandan LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) people bravely and will be sorely missed,"

-- Maria Burnett, senior Africa researcher at Human Rights Watch

"America and Islam are not exclusive and need not be in competition. Instead, they overlap, and share common principles – principles of justice and progress; tolerance and the dignity of all human beings."

-- U.S. President Obama, Cairo 2009

Photo by Amanda Guerrero



Photo by Kara Myers



Photo by Chelsey Wheeler, Langa, Cape Town, South Africa

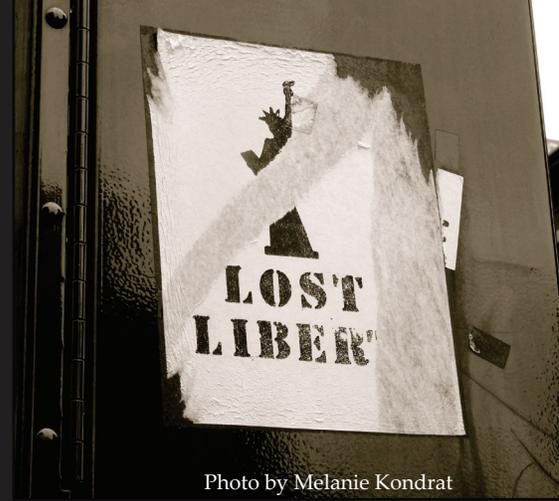


Photo by Melanie Kondrat

"We have walked a very long way and we are not going to stop now. We now have an open country where people have learned their rights and can protest peacefully." --
Doaa Abdelaal, 35 a council member with the international solidarity movement Women Living Under Muslim Law speaking about women in Egypt

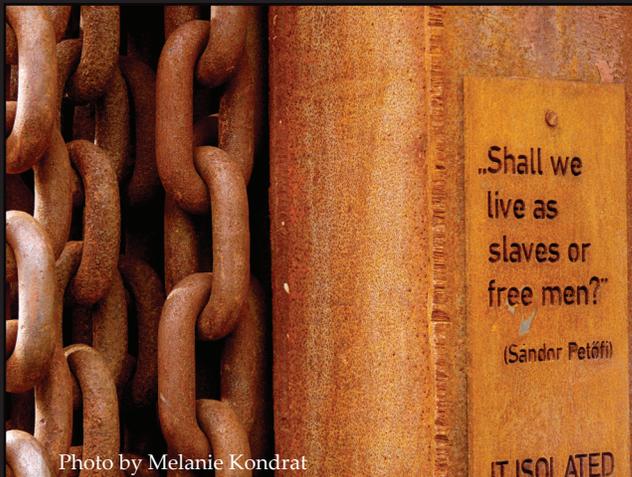


Photo by Melanie Kondrat

"By standing up for dignity, equal opportunity and fair play, the Wisconsin workers have found their way to America's great moral center. They have shown us all, at last, the way back home. By standing with them, we reclaim what is best in our country."

-- Van Jones,

Introducing the 'American Dream' Movement

"There are cultural issues everywhere - in Bangladesh, Latin America, Africa, wherever you go. But somehow when we talk about cultural differences, we magnify those differences."

--Muhammad Yunus on microfinance



Photo by Julia Biemann



Photo by Melanie Kondrat

One Common GOAL!

By Annie Szotkowski

*"This cannot be a team of common men because common men go nowhere. You have to be uncommon."
-- Kurt Russell as Herb Brooks in Walt Disney Picture's "Miracle"*

Over winter break, my family and I viewed, AGAIN, the glorious and inspiring sports movie "Miracle" – the story of the 1980 U.S. Men's Olympic hockey team that advanced to win the gold medal after defeating the Soviet Union – out of unlikely odds. The team's victory became a symbol of hope for national unity in a time of political turmoil, diminishing fuel availability, and bruised national pride. Twenty college-aged hockey players became national heroes out of a welded bond inspired by their demanding but courageous head coach.

Herb pushed his players to break down histories and exclude backgrounds to benefit their game as one team and skate towards a unifying goal...The team's unity, in turn, unified a nation

The 1980 Men's Olympic Hockey head coach Herb Brooks grew up in a working class neighborhood on the east side of St. Paul, Minnesota. His lessons and values from a persistent work ethic melded a love for hockey, a respect for hard work and others, and formed a philosophy behind unity and loyalty. He deserves credit for inspiring a group of athletes to beat all odds as well as further generations to believe in their dreams. As I see it, Herb Brooks is a hero in a number of ways and his coaching philosophy set a benchmark for social justice. He was willing to beat unlikely odds, to take risks, essentially constructing a supporting pillar to uphold social justice.

Herb Brooks did not set out to save the world. He did not target marginalized, oppressed, or discriminated populations. He wanted to achieve a goal, to lead a group of athletes to defeat the Soviet Union hockey team, and ultimately win a gold medal in the Olympics. Coach Brooks knew his group of strong and passionate hockey players could hold their own against the Russian team's abilities, which seemed unbeatable. The Russian men's team played together for ten years and was, technically and skillfully, "perfect." That itself strikes intimidation in the heart of every athlete, the thought of going up against unstoppable greatness.

Competitiveness alone would not win; Talent alone would not win. Coach Brooks envisioned the right means to train, prepare, and inspire his players to win together. Herb pushed his players to

break down histories and exclude backgrounds to benefit their game as one team and skate towards a unifying goal. Social justice advocates strive for unity daily. The team's unity, in turn, unified a nation.

"Miracle" captures Herb Brooks' heroism, but it also reveals his refusal to accept all of the credit. He shared the gold medal and heroic attributes with his team. The team, not the individual, won the gold medal. Herb Brooks' selflessness is a trait found within social justice.

"Miracle" is a metaphor of an American Dream through the looking glass of sports spectators and their reflections on values in the early 1980s. Coach Brooks was more than an American sports hero. The winning Olympic moment dissolved all of the anxiety of the present, or President Carter's woeful speech about Americans fearing "the next five years will be worse than the last five years."

Many goals were achieved: Players referred to themselves as a family. Goal. Players finally realized after the blood, sweat, and tears put out on the ice that their unity was part of a team: Team USA. As Coach Brooks emphasized, the name on the front of the jersey is more important than the one on the back. Teamwork. Goal.

The strength, agility, and creativity executed to beat the Goliaths of the hockey world, the Soviet Union, as reflecting the powers erupting in the political world, were outskated and outplayed. Goal.

The Olympic team's victory and Disney's 2004 "Miracle" relived one of the finest moments in sports history ("Do you believe in miracles? YES!") and the movie continues to inspire Olympians, athletes, students (like myself) and probably countless other groups of people. GOAL!

The Olympics are the prominent stage for unity as athletes worldwide come together to compete. All athletes are reaching for goals in diverse, multi-cultural, athletically competitive environments. The Olympics should not be held responsible for setting the one event every two to four years that portrays a unified world.

Herb Brooks' indirect goal was to inspire. His goal was won. It's your choice to take the shot. You've got the open goal. Will you pass, weave, or shoot?

If you are interested in reading more about Herb Brooks, I recommend "America's Coach" and "Remembering Herbie" by Ross Bernstein.



Photo by Julia Biemann



Photo by Brittany Rowe



Photo by Julia Biemann

Music and Film

Old or new, every song and film on this list is related to the present conflicts that matter most to humanity. Through motion picture and lyrical verse, this list displays the topics we must acknowledge and understand for a better future. They are sure to inspire.

Waiting for Superman

Vampire Weekend "The Kids Don't Stand a Chance"

Arcade Fire "Sprawl II (Mountains Beyond Mountains)"

M.I.A. "Born Free"

Black Gold

Sun Come Up

Andrew Bird "Heretics"

The Dark Side Of Chocolate

Yeah Yeah Yeahs "Dull Life"

Aloe Blacc "I Need a Dollar"

The Devil Came on Horseback

Restrepo

The Tallest Man on Earth "The Blizzard's Never Seen the Desert Sands"

Photo by Julia Biemann



Photo by Melanie Kondrat



Photo by Julia Biemann



Photo by Julia Biemann



Photo by Hannah Johnson



Photo by Michael Grey, Looking for Lujiazui



Photo by Hannah Johnson



Photo by Julia Biemann



Photo by Hannah Johnson



Photo by Hannah Johnson



Photo by Beth

The Only Survivor of the Massacre at El Mozote

By Michael Grey

All I could hear was screaming.
In olive green they descended:
helicopters like locusts, black-

marked soldiers with hands hewn
from the mountains of Morazan.
They came for justice. Vicious

voices told us we were guerrillas
and battered concrete with bullets.
We huddled in houses. They forced

us out, kicked our heads
like dogs. We couldn't speak.
The soldiers, they separated us,

men from women. A woodcutter
tried to escape. With M16s they
strafed him like deer.

Shoving the men and the boys
into the sacristy of Santa Catarina,
the soldiers chopped heads

like a banana freshly peeled,
and piled the bodies, headless,
about to explode with larvae.

They raped women and girls
on the hills of El Chingo and La Cruz.
With the force of mud-caked boots

they pounded themselves into children,
laughing, Like bayonets into flesh
they stabbed, and stabbed, and stabbed.

Being Present Is Enough

By Kelsie Kleiber

This is a blog post I wrote during my time in Zambezi, Zambia this past summer. I went to Africa with the Gonzaga-in-Zambezi Intercultural Servant Leadership Program and spent a month immersed within the culture and working closely with the nursing and healthcare sector.

Living within the Zambezi community these past couple of weeks has certainly been a remarkable and rewarding experience. I have always tried to 'Live in the Moment,' but not until Zambia did I fully realize the power behind this simple message. Africa has taught me the important lesson of being present. That is being present in every aspect of every day, whether through HIV/AIDS testing at the hospital, learning how to prepare a traditional African meal with the one and only Mama Kawatu or simply surrounding yourself with the love of hundreds of children. Needless to say, Africa has given me many opportunities to 'Live in the Moment.'

The Zambezi community endures some extreme hardships. This small town faces a lack of clean water and food, educational resources, employment opportunities and little to access to technology. Despite

these circumstances, the Zambian's share a sense of liveliness and their persistence and patience is demonstrated daily. I find myself constantly touched by the overwhelming amounts of love and welcoming gestures that the community gives us on a daily basis. For in Zambezi, it does not matter how little one may have or the time of the day, the community supports each other and simply gives what they can. This I have experienced in several ways, in the form of gifts, such as an extra bundle of bananas, or even as long conversations out of one's busy day to talk with me and share their stories. This lesson of generosity, in the face of such poverty, encompasses the values of kindness, sharing, and humility I strive for; thus forcing me to reflect upon my own life and the ways in which I lead.

Last week, Father Dominic took our nursing/healthcare group on several home-based care visits. Father Dominic's parish sponsors a home-based care

program, which runs completely on volunteers. Furthermore, each patient suffers from HIV/AIDS as well as multiple other illnesses. After a bumpy ride in Dominic's Toyota, we reached our first patient, Rebecca, who immediately greeted us warmly in her native tongue, Luvale. Once settled upon the grass mats under the shade of the one, lone tree, the severity of her condition struck us. Before us rested a very tiny woman with a deteriorating body, as a result of her constant battle with AIDS. The second we met her I recognized her abnormal breathing pattern, about 40 breaths a minute, signifying how her fight with TB had also contributed

to the weakness of her body. Regardless of her evident weakness and shortness of breath, Rebecca continually works hard in her day-to-day activities laboring in the fields and providing for her family. Father Dominic explained how Rebecca still supports her older, healthy brother, who despite his sister's life threatening condition simply does not contribute because it is "a woman's duty" and not his as a man. Another hurdle Rebecca faces is

the fact that her care-provider had not visited her in three long months, consequently making her feel abandoned and alone. Father Dominic tried to make our visit as lighthearted and comforting as possible; yet, after a quick prayer indicating the end of our visit, Rebecca sud-

denly broke out into wails. Her crying embodied such raw emotion and the experience of seeing those tears fall from her face was absolutely heart breaking and will forever haunt my conscious. Strong emotions struck each of us and keeping our composure for the rest of the visit was clearly not an option. For the first time since I have set foot in Zambezi there was absolutely no language barrier. There was no need to speak the same language to understand the grief and distress behind those tears.

Since that afternoon, our nursing group be-





came stronger. Haunted by the emotions we felt so strongly that day, we yearned to reconnect with Rebecca somehow, somehow. A few days later, we decided to take a leap of faith and follow our gut instincts. We went to the hospital for our daily projects, but Sister Charity ended our session early. Instead of making the trek home, we made some impromptu plans to revisit Rebecca. First, we made a quick sweep through the market to pick her up some beans, potatoes and bread. We were all ready to set out, except we only knew the general direction of her home from when Father Dominic took us. To be honest, we really had no idea where we were going. Nonetheless, we set out with our spirits high. After choosing the wrong fork in the road, the huts and the African brush were starting to look oddly alike. However, just before we could start to worry a little boy named Damien literally popped out of the brush to say hello to the “chindeles” (white people.) With the help of Damien, we regained our sense of direction as he led us to the ‘main road’. This road happened to be the exact path that Rebecca lived on and after a couple hours we found her home! Once we began walking up the familiar trail, I instantly got chills. I was shocked with our success of finding her home, especially considering none of us spoke the local language and we clearly had a lack of direction.

However, our search for Rebecca was far from over. As luck would have it, Rebecca was not home when we arrived and the area was completely empty. Determined to find her, we agreed we would wait all day for her return. Yet as our waiting began, Rebecca’s neighbor Charles, who spoke minimal English, walked through the brush. After several hand signs and questionable translations, Charles began to lead us through this small village of grass huts. After a short walk, we finally found Rebecca, who was visiting among friends a few huts away. The moment we saw her was incredible. Her face broke out into a smile and her eyes became huge with surprise as she recognized us from our previous visit. After a quick greeting with many

“Mwanes” (welcome and thanks,) we were anxious to visit and enjoy her company.

Rebecca does not speak a drop of English. As we were struggling to communicate, another helper crossed our paths. Rebecca’s younger

brother happened to be passing by and came for a visit. Conveniently, this brother spoke English and could translate our words to Rebecca. Our journey that afternoon came full circle. Those moments spent with Rebecca allowed me to realize that being present is truly enough. I believe there is no need for excessive talking or gestures, but just being in the company of others can bring mutual peace and understanding.

Our role here in Zambezi is to serve and live in the community while empowering others through the strength of accompaniment. We do not want to provide handouts or give material goods that will fail to be sustainable in the future. This idea of not providing handouts is an underlying theme in our service, yet our advisor, Josh Armstrong, continually highlights how there are always exceptions; the “gray areas.” My personal experience has supported this and I now understand how situations rarely divide into either black or white, for gray areas always exist. For our nursing group, Rebecca has become our gray area. Rebecca touched my soul in indescribable ways, and I know she is a remarkable woman that will forever remain in my heart. I had always been aware of the AIDS crisis and the devastation it brings; however, only after I connected with this woman did I truly understand the impacts of the disease. By being able to put a personal face to AIDS, I have heightened my empathy, understanding, and personal self-awareness. Rebecca changed my life while opening my eyes and heart in ways I never expected. She passed away about a month after our visit, but I can only hope she too was empowered by our presence and understood that her strength and generous spirit had touched our lives forever. Africa provides many opportunities for smiles and tears, but above all has taught me the importance of recognizing those pure and true moments that come with the connection and presence of people.

A Call for Global Solidarity

By Emily Back

Over one year ago we watched a global outpour of aid and condolence after Haiti was hit by one of the worst earthquakes in the country's history, killing a quarter of a million people. Today, although the media focus has diminished and our minds have been drawn to other issues, questions still remain about the aftermath in this neglected country. Beset with difficulties, after years of coups, economic collapse and natural disasters, one begins to understand why after one year a majority of the areas hit by the earthquake remain tent cities with undrinkable water, political unrest and increasing gang violence.

One of the many questions, an overarching question for the many problems that plague Haiti, is the cause of continual political unrest within the nation. Why, throughout the course of history, have the people of Haiti been unable to form a stable government? This cannot be answered without looking at both the history of Haitian government and global intervention. But the current political unrest arises from the panoply of troubles over a stalemate of who to replace Préval, the return of Baby Doc, and the nightmare of lies that surround governmental and global aid. Besides the questionable U.S. support of long-time dictator Baby Doc (whose "leadership" resulted in death, war, devastation and economic instability), the nations of the world have failed to unite in a meaningful way to support the Haitian nation.

In spite of our minds being repeatedly drawn towards other areas of the world, the support for Haiti to overcome these hardships is needed more than ever before. For one of the most chaotic countries on earth, the slow paced reconstruction has left Haiti barely healed. One can estimate, based on the marginal effectiveness of the cleanup, that it will be over a decade to undo the repercussions of the January 2010 earthquake and to return Haiti back to where it began – as the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. For now, what is clear is the need for solidarity within the global community. Solidarity with the goal of assisting in structural reform of the Haitian governmental system so that self-determination and self-governance by the Haitians themselves can be established to coordinate assistance, heal the wounds, and lead the country into the future.



"I want to appeal to the people of the U.S. and Canada and France, who so generously and without a political agenda have come to the rescue of the Haitian people, to keep doing it. And please if you can, pressure your government, your lobbies, your Halliburtons, your Blackwaters, not to start making money off the distress of the Haitian people. Please pull back, and let us run the show. It is our tragedy. And we're thankful for the help, but we won't let it be the opportunity for the ultimate assassination of this country."

-- Patrick Elie, Advisor to President René Préval

Unjust Justice: Why Reform is Needed in the Chinese Legal System

By Henry Piaskowski

The United States legal system is not perfect. Every day when I read the news, I see stories of socioeconomic disparity, police brutality, or political corruption. These instances do not occur all of the time, but they do happen. However, one thing that America does have is a powerful legal system. We have laws that cannot be broken without punishment and a judiciary that upholds these laws. This is something that not every citizen of every country is afforded; the same legal protection that we are guaranteed in the United States.

The Chinese legal system is not perfect. The rule of law is virtually non-existent. There are several reasons for this. Four constitutions passed within the last 80 years have created an ideological struggle that has prevented any real system from being permanently implemented. The Chinese Communist Party constantly asserts its dominance over the population and long-held cultural values such as *guanxi* often supersede the power of a judiciary. As in most cases, in order to create a more equal system one must know the history behind the current judicial system.

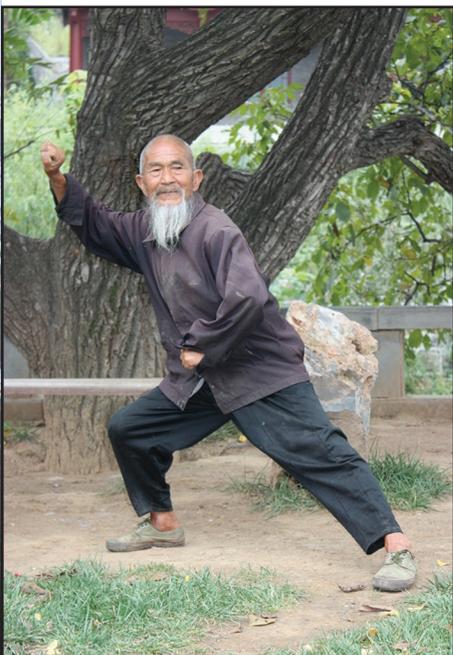
It was not until 1931 that the first attempt at a modern legal system began in China. During this year, the first Chinese Supreme Court was created. It was intended

to function much like the Supreme Court that we have in the United States but this proved to be a futile attempt because the idea of *guanxi* plays an important role in the Chinese legal system. Essentially, *guanxi* describes a patron-client relationship present in many levels of the Chinese government. This symbiotic relationship can have positive outcomes, but it can also be harmful. For example, some people are able to escape punishment by using relationships they have with others in the government. It is important to note that while there are larger problems than *guanxi* in the legal system, it must not be ignored. Due to this mindset, the 1931 court was never successful. Over the next 50 years, several different ideologies were implemented in China with regards to its legal system. During the reign of Mao Zedong, the Chinese judiciary was used primarily for political means. Mao believed that the population should be in a constant state of revolution and used the courts to create this outcome. Class struggle was to be achieved by any means possible. He reached this goal by using the courts to make decisions that led to this struggle.

After Mao left power, several constitutions were passed that had different effects on the legal system. Some granted rights such as the right to an attorney and the right to a trial by jury while others took away these rights. This back and forth between constitutions led to confusion about the law. This confusion gave the Chinese Communist Party the ability to take near complete control of the legal system.

It is clear that the Chinese legal system has gone through many significant changes in a relatively short time span. In addition, in the past 80 years, the system has been misused to serve the purposes of individual such as Mao Zedong. Does that mean it should be changed? Some might say no, but I would argue yes. Many injustices have taken place in recent years that show the need for swift change.

A famous dissident from China who was present at the Tiananmen Square protests in 1989 named Zhou Yongjun was arrested in mainland China on fraud charges. According to Chinese law, he was supposed

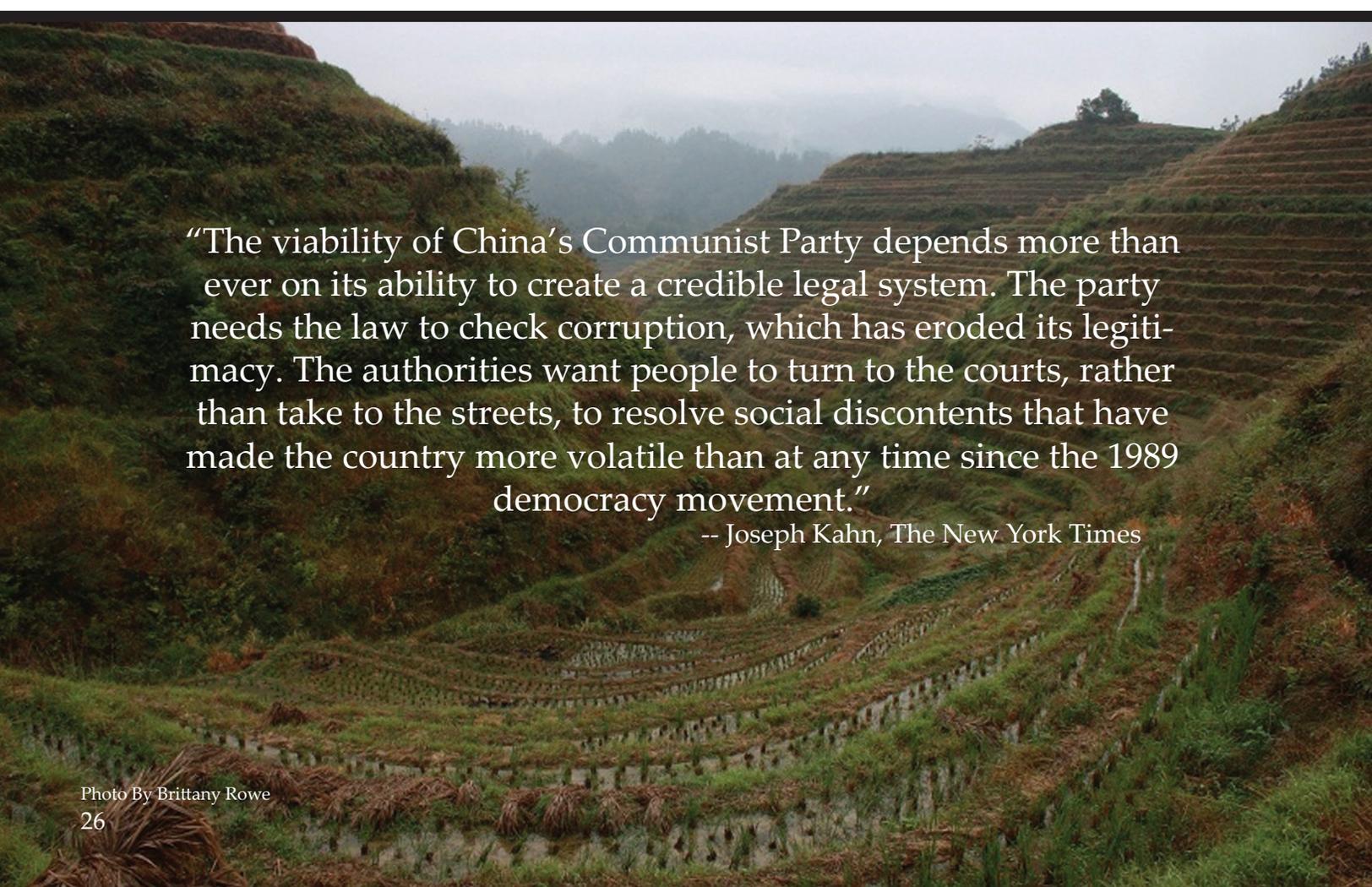


The Party has resisted most attempts at change, but some people within the Party are beginning to understand its importance. Change will not come quickly, nor will the transition be a smooth one, but it will happen

to be sent to Hong Kong to face charges there. He was never sent and was sentenced in a location that did not have jurisdiction to hear his case. He was sentenced even though he should not have been tried in mainland China. Liu Xiaobo is arguably the most famous victim of injustice under China's legal system and typifies how extreme judicial violations can be. Liu has argued against the Chinese Communist Party for many years and even published a treatise outlining requirements China must follow in order to have better human rights. He was sentenced to eleven years in prison in 2009. His crime was "inciting subversion of state power". It is clear that Liu was arguing for the rights of people within China and was punished because of it. Last year, Liu was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts.

Unfortunately, cases such as these are not uncommon in China. We must try and effect change so that people are no longer unjustly imprisoned for crimes they may not have committed. I am a strong believer that each country should be allowed to choose how it structures its government. Some systems might work better than the typical Western system and some might not. That is not up for the United States, European Union, or anyone else to decide. What these countries can decide is when another country is violating the rights of its citizens. At that point, action is more justified.

The question remains: what can be done about this? That answer is not a simple one. The United States and the EU could put pressure on China to reform their legal system in order to make it more fair and legitimate. The combined efforts of 28 countries would most likely have an impact, but it is impractical. China is the world's fastest growing economy and is quickly gaining political and economic power. In addition, China is more a part of our everyday lives than many of us realize. The country owns massive amounts of American debt and supplies the United States with many items including cars, basic necessities, and clothing.. Essentially, this means that we are politically and economically connected to China. China owns debt from several European countries and actively supports many projects within the European Union. One consequence of this is that many major countries are semi-dependent on China. Outright opposition to China's legal system could potentially result in international backlash from the Chinese government, which would only create more tension between the involved countries.



"The viability of China's Communist Party depends more than ever on its ability to create a credible legal system. The party needs the law to check corruption, which has eroded its legitimacy. The authorities want people to turn to the courts, rather than take to the streets, to resolve social discontents that have made the country more volatile than at any time since the 1989 democracy movement."

-- Joseph Kahn, The New York Times

It can be argued that China's current main goal is to solidify its place among the world's most powerful countries. In order to do this, it will have to create and maintain stable relationships with already powerful countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, and others. These countries can begin to require China to modify its judiciary in order to keep good relations. Each country would not have to publically humiliate or defame China; instead the process could be done between the two governments. In this way, the Chinese government could save face while still making the necessary changes to its legal system. In my opinion, this is the best option.

Many injustices have taken place in recent years that show the need for swift change

It is important for you, the reader, to understand that I do not believe the entire Chinese legal system needs to become more "Westernized". Instead, it should change to better honor the rights of Chinese citizens. Citizens are beginning to voice their opinions about the judiciary and the Chinese Communist Party hears them. The Party has resisted most attempts at change, but some people within the Party are beginning to understand its importance. Change will not come quickly, nor will the transition be a smooth one, but it will happen. The best we can do is to continue to help those who are trying to make the system more fair and equal. In due time, everyone could have judicial equality.



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Photo by Hannah Johnson



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Photo by Melanie Kondrat



Photo by Julia Biemann



Photo by Julia Biemann



Photo by Melanie Kondrat



Photo by Hannah Back



Photo by Hannah Johnson



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Photo by Julia Biemann



Photo by Hannah Johnson



Photo by Julia Biemann

A New Middle East and a New World?

By Emily Back and Julia Biemann

It all started on December 17, 2010 in Tunisia. A 26 year old food cart vendor could not afford to pay his taxes and extortion money to the local police, so they took his cart, his only source of livelihood. Mohammad Bouazizi doused himself in gasoline and set himself on fire in protest. Then on December 22nd another young man, Hussein Nagi Felhi, also killed himself in protest via electrocution. As he climbed the high voltage power line he shouted, "No for misery, no for unemployment!"

Within days of these horrible incidents, protests were spreading throughout Tunisia. Frustration with soaring youth unemployment, chronic political repression, police brutality and anger at government corruption has welled up across the Middle East, including Egypt, in dramatic fashion. After the overthrow of Tunisian President Ben Ali, who fled to Saudi Arabia on January 14th, an opposition government was appointed on January 17th. After Tunisia, the Mubarek regime of Egypt was also overthrown, with Mubarak finally stepping down on February 11th, after decades in power. At the time of this writing, it appears that Libya and Yemen will follow suit.

Interestingly, after Mubarek stepped down, protesters shouted "Egypt is free! Egypt is free!". While many rejoice with the people of these countries taking action against tyrannical regimes, assuming the revolution will likely lead to a more open and, perhaps, democratic government, there is also great risk. Complete upheaval and chaos in these and other countries of the Middle East may lead to even worse regimes than the ones being replaced. One needs only to look at Iran to see that an organized group can create a Theocracy out of chaos, where individual rights and freedoms are almost nonexistent, and leaders are appointed by the most powerful gang rather than elected. Brutal repression is committed in the name of religion, and people who seek freedom are subject to being imprisoned or killed. The Muslim Brotherhood (which includes the terrorist organization Hamas) is the largest organized opposition group in Egypt, for example, and poses a serious threat to stability in the region should the Brotherhood gain control. Another possibility is the rise of a dictator who may simply use force to subdue the people all over again, in the name of peace and law and order. The use of social networks as a new tool for the masses and for organizing opposition on a moment's notice may continue to counter and even prevent some of these "negative" outcomes, making it more likely that democratic reforms and freedoms can occur. Unfortunately, the credibility of the West, particularly the United States, has been compromised by its support of dictatorial governments willing to assist the U.S. in achieving its diplomatic and other goals, and oppression by the U.S. supported dictator has been secondary to achieving the main U.S. goal. If "the enemy of my enemy is my friend" in State Department jargon, one may end up with some odd friends.

One thing that is clear is that historic change has just occurred in the Middle East, and the outcome will significantly affect the entire world.

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