



The Micah Centre at The King's University
 9125 - 50 Street, Edmonton, AB T6B 2H3
 780-465-3500 www.micahcentre.ca

Helping students at The King's University grow a global vision of justice and renewal



Reflections from the 2017 Honduras Water Project

In May of this year, the annual Honduras Water Project team set out for the community of Varsovia in the southern municipality of El Triunfo, Choluteca. This was the third team from King's to visit Varsovia, to learn about poverty, development, the people of Honduras, and to work alongside some of the local men and women to complete a gravity fed water system supplying safe drinking water to 327 inhabitants of 89 houses. The following are two team members' reflections on their experience.

Us - Owen Leeder

*Our story began as a voice behind the clouds-
 A sprinkle of love,
 That came from above,
 When a heavenly voice spoke aloud*

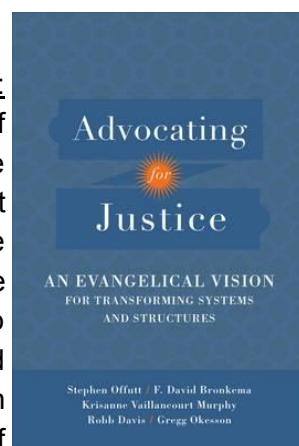
*While we were forged in the fires of heaven,
 On earth the breeze
 Dances with the trees
 Free to walk this masterpiece on the seventh*

Guilt. That's my usual reaction to poverty. And unfortunately it's not a guilt that spurs me into action but instead often it shuts me down and makes me want to turn the other way and walk on by. I have experienced it when I've learned about poverty in classes or seminars and I have felt it when I see homeless people on the street and I felt it while I spent almost a month with the beautiful people of the village of Varsovia in Honduras. Poverty scares me and makes me feel guilty because it requires something of me. The problem is, though, that often I do not know what that something is and, if I'm being honest, whether I am willing to give it. After spending time among these people though, even if it was just a few weeks, I am coming to a slightly different understanding. These people, "the poor" are already at work, they are already acting to change their circumstances. They often need people to come alongside them to do so, whether that's through money or other ways, but they are leading the change. This does not absolve me from responsibility because their situation still does require something of me and I do have things to give. However, now I see that so often my inability to act comes from the prideful view that it's all up to me. That I need to fix everything and be the one to save the day. But these people are not looking for a savior, they are looking for support. Even with these realizations, I still often have to deal with guilt. Maybe, though, a little bit of guilt is good because it reminds me that I am called to act and that while it's not all up to me I still have a part to play. - Heidi Frei

Director's Book Recommendation

My wife is a grade one teacher, which may be the most important job in the world. Among all the other things she teaches kids, she teaches them to use their 'inside voice' when they are inside and their 'outside voice' when they are outside. They even have a 'whisper voice' for speaking when they shouldn't. Imagine that. She even suggests I learn to use my inside voice – except I don't really have one! The idea of using the **right voice for the right occasion** is appealing to me for reasons other than classroom courtesy. Using the 'right voice' might even be considered a Christian calling, part of the vocation of discipleship, especially when we recognize that we have been given a 'Kingdom voice', which is a voice that speaks peace, justice and reconciliation.

Finding and using a Kingdom Voice is the theme of a new book, Advocating for Justice: An Evangelical Vision for Transforming Systems and Structures written by a team of evangelical scholars and activists. The authors do several things very well: they recognize that overcoming poverty cannot be done simply through ongoing development – it requires that broken systems need to be fixed and that dangerous ideologies need to be challenged. They also correctly name injustice as a problem of power imbalances – some have too much and use it for selfish reasons while others are deprived of power. They do not repeat Lord Acton's error, suggesting that all power corrupts, but recognize instead that power is really just capacity that can be used for good or evil – advocacy speaks truth to power and to The Powers. Finally the authors identify some very inspiring examples of how advocacy has made a difference, such as the work of the Association for More Just Society in Honduras, whose work has made a tremendous impact, as well as the success of faith based NGOs in (cont'd next page)



The Road to Reconciliation - Emily Faucher

Last fall the Micah Centre sponsored five students who, along with Micah Centre staff, attended an event titled "Road to Reconciliation: an evening with Dr. Willie Littlechild". The event featured presentations and conversation with Truth and Reconciliation Commissioner Littlechild, as well as Charlene Bearhead, the Education Lead for the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation. Bearhead focused her presentation on education and how to live out reconciliation in the day-to-day. She encouraged the audience to more frequently take a moment to verbally acknowledge what treaty land we inhabit, rather than making a note of it



only in front of big audiences, because it is always treaty land, every day. She also encouraged maintaining political correctness in private, asking listeners to do it because it is the right thing to do, rather than for show; in this regard, Bearhead envisioned the family at home, sitting around the table for dinner, speaking in a politically correct way.

The focus of Chief Littlechild's presentation was geared more towards the history of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. He reminded his audience that the major first step towards the development of the Commission was that the churches involved in establishing and maintaining the Residential Schools, and even the country of Canada, were sued for the atrocities committed against his people. In fact, Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission was the first court ordered commission. It has focused on informing Canadians about what happened in Residential Schools and documenting the truth of anyone personally influenced by them. When listening to the personal stories of former students of these schools, or of heartbroken family members, Littlechild emphasized the importance of offering a "blanket of safety" made up of cultural and health supports so that those telling their story feel that it is a safe place to do so. Many of them, he explained, had been trying to hide their stories for years, and were sharing for the first time. Littlechild also compared today's child welfare system to when children were taken from their families to be put into the residential schools, and reminded his audience that finding the stories of the missing children, those who did not survive and whose stories are lost, is crucial in order for families to properly mourn. Reconciliation, he told us, is a renewed Nation to Nation relationship. It is a responsibility for all Canadians, and requires action and support. The image used to illustrate this was that of walking along railroad tracks. Alone, you fall quickly, but if you have a friend balancing on the rail, and you hold hands, you can walk for miles.

In order to take concrete steps towards achieving reconciliation, the Commission has published 94 Calls to Action, which list areas in which action is required, as well as stipulations on what steps are necessary. Some of the categories of these Calls include child welfare, education, language and culture, and health. These are all available publicly, online, for anyone who is interested in educating themselves so they can better be involved in moving Canada towards full reconciliation. Both Bearhead and Littlechild were very clear that change had to come from within Canada, and that all Canadians were responsible to become more educated, in order to "do better because you know better."

Alumni Update - Stacey Brandsma (2013)

After graduating from King's, Stacey worked with World Renew in Cambodia learning about agricultural cooperatives and conducting a livelihoods assessment. In 2014 she started working with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) in Zambia as a planning, monitoring, and evaluation officer. Stacey works with local partners to develop project proposals and budgets, then monitors and evaluates those programs. The programs that she manages cover quite a range of topics. The biggest project is a conservation agriculture project, where extension officers work with model farmers overseeing a smaller group of farmers new to conservation techniques. Another program provides funding to a school for children with disabilities who, in Zambian culture, are often neglected. They also have a project working with HIV positive prisoners in some of the larger prisons in Zambia, where program staff discuss the benefits of adhering to medication regimes and how to live life fully while being HIV positive. MCC Zambia also has many other interesting programs which include food relief, education, and peace.



Stacey has been living in Choma, a small market town, with her husband Todd Jordan, who she met while working for MCC. Todd works as a consultant for a trade school in Choma, providing skills training for vulnerable youth at subsidized costs. In December they will be moving to the United States and are excited to see what the future has in store.

Director's book recommendation cont'd

lobbying for the Kimberley Accord, which brought the problem of blood diamonds to the World's attention. Although the book suffers from repetition and clumsiness that suggests authorship by committee, the argument is clear, important and timely. Much progress has been made in the past decades in addressing poverty, but much remains to be done. The Christian church and its agencies must be prepared to graduate to a new level of work, beyond relief and development, to find the right voice to speak truth to power: reading this book will help churches do just that.