



September Newsletter

The Micah Center
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The Micah Centre is an Interdisciplinary initiative at The Kings University College, established for the purpose of fostering greater understanding and action among students, faculty and the community at large around issues of global poverty, peacemaking and social justice. Through internships, conferences, special lectures, partnerships and a host of other activities, the Micah Centre explores the implications of seeking justice in today's global context.

For more information see:
www.micahcentre.ca

Welcome from Roy Berkenbosch....

From Dar es Salaam to Kolkata to Honduras; from street level ministries with Mustard Seed in Edmonton's inner city to human rights advocacy; through Lady in Red art auctions to benefit concerts; concerning HIV/AIDS, poverty, education and climate change – across the span of geography and issues, King's students made their mark on the world this past year as they embraced Micah's challenge to do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with God.

When I speak with students about these many diverse learning opportunities one theme that recurs is the discovery that making a sustainable, deep and lasting difference is a lot harder than it looks. How do you help inner city folks who suffer addictions and mental illness in ways that do not create dependency? That's a challenge. How can we overcome the legacy of residential schools? That will take much time and persistent effort to reverse stereotypes and attitudes. What will it take to seek justice for Omar Khadr? Time will tell. Students learned that the underlying causes of poverty in Honduras are complex and interconnected and responses will need to be equally complex. The economic crisis of the past eighteen months has had the most adverse impact in poor communities and the global effort to achieve the Millennium Development Goals has suffered a severe set back. Many of the targets clearly will not be achieved.

No doubt this is why the ancient prophet included "walking humbly with God" in his ordering of priorities. Seeking justice and loving mercy is tiring, frustrating, exhausting, hard work. It's not a project but a way of life. Those who accept Micah's challenge need the sustaining grace of God, the energizing freshness of the spirit, the constant encouragement of the "all-things-new" vision, the solidarity of lamenting prophets with eyes-wide-open to be our constant companions on the journey.

The coming year is full of promise and opportunity for the Micah Centre. For one thing we have staff!! Justine Vandergrift has taken up half time work as the centre's first administrative assistant and brings a lot of energy and ideas to the table. No longer involved in student life administration, I hope to have more time to develop partnerships and new programs for Micah and to extend our reach into the community. My involvement with CRWRC and Micah Challenge Canada will also generate more opportunities for the Micah Centre. Micah Challenge Canada is re-launching its campaign in readiness for the G8 summit next year in Huntsville – a critical opportunity for leaders to recommit to the MDG's. There is much work to be done in advance of that and students are critical to the campaign's success. This year, MASS students will take a leadership role in planning the Winter I.S. conference on the theme of homelessness which is looking very good so far. We will continue our awareness raising campaigns surrounding the MDG's, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and human rights, especially concerning Omar Khadr. Look for the launch of the Micah Lecture series and a new updated website. And of course there is the Honduras Water project, the Faith and International Development Conference in January at Calvin, internships, and this year the URBANA gathering..... the list goes on.

Karl Barth once said that to clasp the hands in prayer is to begin an uprising in the world. Pray with us so that we might together take up the challenge to do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with God.



MASS Kicks Off: Pull Your Weight Tug 'o' War

On Friday, September 11, the Micah Action/Awareness Student Society (MASS) welcomed new King's Students by challenging them to a tug 'a' war against the returning students. The event was put on by the MASS leadership team to kick off another year of action and awareness, playing off of the idea of pulling your weight not only physically but as a citizen seeking global justice. The returning students won in a best of three tugging contest and all students enjoyed pizza provided by MASS. MASS has big plans for the school year and will continue to work with the Micah Centre to achieve its goals. See photo (right).

Monthly Millennium Development Goal

The Micah Centre plans to spend significant energy on the Millennium Development Goals this year. These are the eight goals that address the world's main development challenges and are to be achieved by 2015. The MDG's were adopted by 189 nations and signed by 147 heads of state and governments during the UN Millennium Summit in 2000. Given that there are eight months in the academic year and eight specific and complex goals, we plan to highlight one goal each month. The eight MDG's are:

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger,
2. Achieve universal primary education,
3. Promote gender equality and empower women,
4. Reduce child mortality,
5. Improve maternal health,
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases,
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a Global Partnership for Development.

This month we are focusing on the second goal: achieve universal primary education. Included in this newsletter is a informative insert from our partner Micah Challenge Canada on this goal along with the third goal involving gender equality. With the beginning of a new school year, the importance and education is obvious each day. For most of us, Education has been a large and very influential part of our entire lives. Without our educational histories, where would we be?

While reflecting on the MDG's listed above, one starts to see how each goal is vital to the next. This is particularly obvious in the case of education. As the King's community prepares for a new school year and reflects on an Interdisciplinary Conference on Technology and Identity, we want to be mindful of how privileged we are to be exposed to such things. It is truly an injustice that over 100 million children of primary school age are not in school and therefore, may never experience the opportunities that education affords. We must continue to hold our leaders accountable for fulfilling their promise to see universal primary education by 2015. Moreover, this goal does not emphasize enough the quality of education. It is one thing for a government to provide free education and another to provide quality education that seeks to improve the future of its students and communities.



Post Truth and Reconciliation I.S. Conference: Where are we now?

Remarkable things happened at last January's Interdisciplinary conference. Residential school survivors, aboriginal leaders, church leaders and government representatives gathered at King's to speak truth and embrace reconciliation. Stories were told and heard about the painful legacy of residential schools that effects multiple generations. Words of rage and healing were spoken, reflecting the difficulty of speaking truth to power. Lessons were learned about a dark period in Canadian history, one which ended not all that long ago. Was this a King's event? Yes and no. We were certainly glad to be the hosts. But as the planning for this event got underway we were joined by many other partners who offered invaluable advice and insight – they took the ball and ran with it. And we are thus in their debt. Friendships were formed; intentions were expressed to keep working together, to pursue truth and reconciliation in tandem. We said we wanted to be part of the healing journey for aboriginal neighbors. Because of what we were given as a community, we have an obligation to keep looking for meaningful ways to stay connected. Where are we now? Not far enough.

www.trc-cvr.ca

Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission

Books for Zambia

The Micah Centre and MASS have been involved in assisting a school in Zambia called Sophie's Christian Academy. The primary and secondary school that was founded, built and is currently directed by former King's grad and friend Francis N'Gandwe along with his wife Sophie who ran the school while Francis was with us at Kings over the last 4 years getting his Psychology degree. Last Spring, MASS collected over 2000 books for Francis and hosted a benefits concert featuring Bill Bourne and Joe Nolan to raise funds for shipping the books. Francis began to spread the word about the project and connected with Edmonton's Riverview Rotary Club and Sherwood Park Christian School who donated a whole libraries worth of good books. The "Books for Zambia" project caught on and became a greater community effort. Together we have collected enough books, desks and computers to fill a 40 foot container that we hope to have shipped out to Francis early October. We hope that these resources are of great benefit to the Kitwe community and that the Micah Centre will develop a strong partnership with Francis and Sophie in the future.



Students and teacher from Sophie's Christian Academy in Kitwe, Zambia.

King's Rez and CRWRC

Paul Jensen, the King's residence director connected with CRWRC representatives Crystle Numan and Iona Buisman over the summer regarding a program where Kings Students, particularly in their first and second years, could connect personally with the international projects CRWRC has taken on.

Although this is a residence program for now, Jensen hopes it can expand in the future. Currently he has it set up with 12 residence tower and apartment floors are paired up with 12 CRWRC staff and their families in various countries. Each CRWRC staff is in regular contact with the ministry coordinators or residence council members on each floor. Information packages were given to each floor so that the group of students could become knowledgeable about the work of a particular family in a particular country. Students have committed to hold their CRWRC staff up in prayer and keep in touch through letters and e-mail. The idea behind the program is to challenge students to apply their community living here at King's to the rest of the world and gain a better understanding of global issues and transformational development. Jensen hopes that this advocacy and awareness program allows floor members to develop personal connections to the work of CRWRC and perhaps lead them into opportunities involving transformational development in the future.

www.crwrc.org



The Micah Centre is a project within the Kings University College established for the purpose of raising awareness and promoting action around issues of global poverty, peacemaking and social justice. We cooperate with other similar projects and organizations such as:

Micah Challenge Canada

www.micahchallenge.ca

Make Poverty History

www.makepovertyhistory.org/

MDG Watch

www.mdg-globalwatch.org/

CRWRC- Christian Reformed World Relief Committee

www.crwrc.org

MCC- Mennonite Central Committee

www.mcc.org

The Mustard Seed (Edmonton)

www.mustard.ab.ca/

SAGA- Students Against Global Apathy (U of A)

<http://www.ualberta.ca/~saga/>

CPI- Christian Peacemakers International

<http://www.cpi-cpf.ca/>

Kairos

<http://www.kairoscanada.org/>

CCRDA- Canadian Christian Relief and Development Agency

<http://www.ccrda.org/>

NADC- The Northern Alberta Diaconal Conference of the Christian Reformed Church

<http://www.diaconalministries.com/>

CPJ- Citizens for Public Justice

<http://www.cpj.ca/>

ACGC- Alberta Council for Global Cooperation

<http://www.acgc.ca/>

AERDO- Association of Evangelical Relief and Development Organizations

<http://www.aerdo.net/>

IJM-International Justice Mission

<http://www.ijm.org/>

Project Ploughshares

<http://www.ploughshares.ca/>

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission

www.trc-cvr.ca

GEA- The Greater Edmonton Alliance

<http://www.greateredmontonalliance.com/e107/page.php?3>

Acting On Aids- World Vision

www.actingtonaids.org

AJS Honduras

<http://www.ajshonduras.org/>

Dear Church re: Omar Khadr?

By Justine A. Vandergrift

When talking especially to Christians about the 'Omar Khadr Issue' and my work with Khadr's Canadian based lawyer, Dennis Edney, I often feel I have to whisper. Omar Khadr, over seven year Guantanamo Bay detainee, captured at 15 for allegedly throwing a hand grenade that killed a U.S. medic, is still shackled to the floor of his Cuban prison whenever he leaves his cell block. Omar is a Canadian citizen, was a child soldier, has endured extensive torture, and has been denied his basic human rights, namely the right to a fair trial. As we have seen with the Canadian Government's recent refusal to comply with the Federal Court's order to repatriate Omar, our government is determined to make Omar a special case. While all other detainees from Western nations have been returned home at their countries' request, The Canadian government continues to ignore the rule of law and to defy international agreements about the treatment of children that it helped to craft in order to keep Omar in shackles Controversial? A little.

Ever since Omar's Edmonton based lawyer Dennis Edney presented at last fall's Interdisciplinary Conference on Human Dignity, I have been trying to figure out how to explain effectively who Omar Khadr is and why this justice issue has become so important to me. I've been trying to share my understanding of the issue to people who have a wide range of knowledge and opinions about the Khadr case. I try to make clear that I am no Harper hater or Al-Qaeda supporter; I am simply disgusted by the blatant injustice Omar has lived through. Making this clear in everyday conversation is not easy.

In May I was seconded by the Micah Centre to work as an assistant to Mr. Edney. Over the summer I have been awe struck by the amount of knowledge, money, time, effort and will-power it takes to see a case like this through within the legal system. It has been an inspiring experience to work with someone who is so committed to justice for Omar. I will continue to assist Mr. Edney with awareness and fund raising until Omar, Lord willing, is repatriated.

In my opinion, whether Omar Khadr is guilty or innocent is not the issue at stake. I will leave that decision to the courts, but it must be a fair court. The issue is that Omar has not received a fair trial at Guantanamo, a prison which is clearly not set up to provide a fair trial. That is why the President of the United States has vowed to close it down. Innocent or not, one thing is clear: Omar's human dignity has been disregarded from the beginning.

I believe that Christians should be taking every opportunity to advocate for Omar. If we truly consider what the Lord requires of us, "to do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with God," we will recognize that the racism, discrimination and complicity in torture involved in Omar Khadr's case are a disgrace. Jesus These reactions are far removed from a loving, merciful and humble approach to justice. According to Mr. Edney, Omar has not received justice according to the rule of law. I believe that Justice according to the rule of law is only a pale shadow of justice according to Christ's love, but it is a minimum we cannot ignore. Therefore, how can we, as servants of God turn a blind eye to Omar Khadr and his denial of mere legal justice?

Engaging in Omar Khadr's story has often left me disappointed in structures that I had previously trusted more. I believe that the Government of Canada, the people of Canada and especially the Church should be ashamed of supporting a process that has not reflected even a trace of Christ's love and restorative justice.

While the tensions and political controversy around this case have made me want to whisper, the injustice makes me want to yell. I will do neither. Instead I will raise my voice in protest and prayer. Will you join me?

It's not too late.

Four Months In Tanzania

By Geoff Brouwer

Looking back on my summer internship with the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC) in Tanzania, it's difficult to know exactly what to write. One of the most common questions I receive on being back is, "What did you do?". Well, I traveled to Tanzania to work with one of CRWRC's partners in a rural village called Sengerema, based along Lake Victoria. Yet the question persists, "what did you actually do?". As an intern in a developing country, people often seem to assume I should be working to 'develop' Sengerema and its people (after all I did get a grant from the Students for Development Program). But, my experience this summer cannot simply be defined by what I accomplished or by what I did. One of the most powerful things I learned was passed on to me by one of the Tanzanians I lived with:

"A community cannot be developed, it can only develop itself, for real development means the growth of people. If real development is to take place the people have to be involved."

In that case, perhaps **a more fitting question would be, "What did the people of Sengerema do?" and, "What did I learn?"**.

I worked with the Sengerema Informal Sector Association (SISA), a small Tanzanian organization of small business owners who have taken on the courageous responsibility of supporting those struggling to meet basic needs in their community. In Sengerema, over 90% of all people are dependant upon agriculture or fishing for their livelihood. As a result they are deeply and directly tied into their surrounding environment. Yet, the village is also suffering from periodic drought, devastating deforestation, and erosion all leading to difficult living conditions and heightened poverty. Thus, SISA has initiated various agricultural and environmental projects (among many others) such as small irrigation projects, tree-planting programs, and many more which are initiated by the people of SISA for the people of their community encouraging each other and working to empower each other.

I also had the opportunity to attend the 4th Triennial Global Consultation on Creation Stewardship and Climate Change in Limuru, Kenya, which was a 6 days gathering of Christian leaders from worldwide development organizations to discuss challenges and exchange ideas with how to address the effects of climate change. For most of these development workers based in developing countries climate change is being felt directly in the forms of drought and in other areas flooding. As a part of the consultation I was able to help draft a climate statement which will be forwarded onto world leaders in the UN Climate gathering in Copenhagen this December on behalf of the Evangelical Church as well as another draft which will be sent to church congregations across the world.

My time and experiences in East Africa allowed me to grasp many concepts and theories that I had only read about in class: the relationships between environmental issues and poverty, the complexities of development work in a rural setting, the cooperation between government and NGOs, and the inner-workings and strategies of poverty alleviation and empowerment. Yet, I have not simply returned with a better knowledge of these things, but I returned having built real relationships with the people I worked with and lived with each day who are determined to overcome the poverty in their village and create a better life for their community. Staying in the village I lived, ate, sang, played with and got to know a family who warmly accepted me into their household composed of about 14 people ranging from infants who were a few months old to a great grandmother. I had the incredibly valuable and transforming experience of living and building real relationships with this family, allowing me to grasp first hand the challenges and realities of a large family living in a poor rural area. It has been an incredibly eye-opening experience that has brought me to new point of understanding I had not been able to have before.



Geoff Brouwer, pictured right, learns about trees In Sengerema, Tanzania. Geoff is one of the five current leaders of MASS and the VP external of the King's Students Association. Geoff's passion for justice is evident in his activities both in and outside of King's.

Next Month's Issue:

- Micah Lecture Series
- Megan Olivier and Edmonton's Mustard Seed
- STAND UP Against Poverty Day Oct. 16
- MDG #1- Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger
- And more!

Got a story or news item you think we should hear? Send 'em in!

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www.micahcentre.ca



COMMUNITY, HOME, HOPE, POWER, DIGNITY

*"Some of us have worked on Wall Street,
and some of us have slept on Wall Street.*

We are a community of struggle.

Some of us are rich people trying to escape our loneliness.

Some of us are poor folks trying to escape the cold.

*Some of us are addicted to drugs,
and others are addicted to money.*

*We are a broken people who need each other and God,
for we have come to recognize the mess that we have created of our world
and how deeply we suffer from that mess.*

*Now we are working together to give birth to a new society
within the shell of the old.*

Another world is possible.

Another world is necessary.

Another world is already here".

-Shane Claiborne

THINK ABOUT IT... IS January 20-21, 2010



The Micah Centre would like to send a group of Kings Students to the Urbana Missions Conference in St. Louis in December. There will be six Micah Grants made available for this. Students interested in going should contact Justine Vandergrift at justine.vandergrift@kingsu.ca