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Advancing “The Call” with an
Undergraduate Global Studies Program at Northwest University

Katherine A. Cvitovich

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Professor Forrest Inslee

Northwest University

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Abstract

The addition of an undergraduate program in Global Studies is recommended for Northwest University to further support its mission and advance “The Call.” Already a Christ-centered university with programs that equip students to answer the call of God on their lives in several fields, Northwest University has developed strong undergraduate programs including but not limited to business, teaching, missiology and psychology. A new program in Global Studies would leverage existing program offerings and include current as well as new classes and staff. The program would also support NU’s mission by offering studies to combat poverty, injustice, and environmental justice. NU prepares students to carry out “The Call” and engage the world with Christ-likeness, knowledge, and wisdom. The current curriculum offers many opportunities for students to develop the skills and character at Northwest University to be used for God’s kingdom. A Global Studies program that focuses on the issues facing our world today is at the heart of what NU values and dreams for its students. The Global Studies program would be a powerful tool for preparing students to serve in leadership roles in a variety of disciplines to ultimately influence for a better world. As a university that understands and cares about the issues around globalization, poverty, social injustices, dramatic climate change, and environmental degradation, this program would add value to NU’s current offerings, set them apart from other universities, make them cutting edge on the best education programs, and empower its passionate student body to change the world one person at a time.

The Call and the Critical Need for an
Undergraduate Global Studies Program at Northwest University

The impact of an increasingly globalized and connected world today has been a catalyst for dramatic changes, some positive and others quite negative, especially for men, women, and children living in the least developed countries (LDCs). Providing undergraduate students with a program that specifically studies the global issues of our day – social injustice, poverty, and environmental decay – and the opportunity to develop strategies for confronting these problems is something that NU could do well with its existing infrastructure, mission, and resources. World-wide change begins with educating our future generation of students to carry on the university's mission. The "Call" of Northwest University is to prepare its students to engage with the world and develop future professionals and leaders that serve and follow Christ. An undergraduate degree in Global Studies is the best addition to its current curriculum to support the mission and prepare students for a life-long pursuit to influence the force of globalization. Students can learn and develop ways to improve provision of food, water, shelter, justice, and freedom so as to support "live life in all its fullness" for all humanity as God intended. Prosperity has yet to reach the poor unless there are willing and knowledgeable advocates in various sectors – ministry, business, science, and politics - that invest in the lives of the poor, oppressed, and disadvantaged. NU would be able to increase their contribution to in these sectors by educating their students with a better understanding of our world problems and how to tackle them. Learning how to bring the wealthy and poor in communities, churches, businesses, corporations, NGOs, and governments around the world together for a common cause makes it

possible to create a better world for all humanity and eradicate the problems of poverty, injustice, and environmental degradation. As we know, this is no easy task. These issues are complex and their solutions are no simpler. President of World Vision, Richard Stearns explained it best when he said in an interview with *Christianity Today*, “There's a tendency to say, ‘This ain't rocket science. People are hungry; feed them.’ Well, the deeper you get into relief and development, you realize it *is* rocket science, because you are dealing with all kinds of social, cultural, political, and religious landmines. What have you really accomplished if you haven't gotten beneath the surface and started to wrestle with the root causes?” (Christianity Today, 2006).

There are solutions to the world's problems that are yet to be discovered and developed. As one of the first and only Christ centered university's in the area, Northwest University has a unique opportunity to create much needed change for God's creation and ignite the catalyst for change from this small corner of the United States by offering an undergraduate study program in the area of Global Studies. The university already has the passion for the cause and resources to be leveraged for this kind of under-taking.

Northwest University's Mission and "The Call"

Why offer a Global Studies degree at Northwest University? Northwest University is a Christian university with a unique call to follow Jesus Christ and His mission to reach the lost, the broken, the oppressed, and the disadvantaged because of their worth, given by God, as His image bearers. God created man with precious value and clearly states this when he told Noah after the flood that “Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image” (Gen 9:6). In the same discussion, God also promised to never

again send a flood that would destroy mankind and the creatures of the earth and entrusted man to take care of one another, rule over the animals and birds of the air, and toil the earth. A degree in Global Studies is one of the best ways to prepare future leaders for “ruling over the earth” with the knowledge and resources that help them contribute in a Christ centered and wise way that lives out NU’s call. Northwest University already has so much to offer students but this would set them apart from other universities and further support their “Call”. The first aspect of the “Call” is the heart. It is a central component for students to serve the world with selflessness and utmost excellence. The Global Studies program supports the belief “that God continues to call every man and woman to a life of faithful, devoted service” and allows them otherwise unavailable opportunities to do just that. Secondly, NU values the head, the mind, and the development of “character and competence” whereby “the entire University community strives to engage biblical Christianity with every aspect of life.” Offering international programs that educate students on the spiritual aspect of ministry, such as Intercultural Studies and Missiology, are valuable components of NUs “Call.” Imagine the multiplier effect of adding a Global Studies program that addresses the physical needs (food, water, safety, etc) paired with its existing programs. Northwest University would be unlike any other university in the area and its student body would be uniquely valuable to the causes. Lastly, NU values the “hand” and “finds its crowning joy in thousands of alumni serving in nearly every profession around the world. Northwest University is committed to preparing people for service and leadership, doing God’s work in God’s world.” The university’s mission is to prepare students for work in all professions around the world and Global Studies is the ideal undergraduate offering for students who will lead our future internationally and for God’s Word to go out to all nations. NU takes its responsibility seriously to prepare students for good works both here and abroad and has the

foundation in teaching that would be powerful with this addition. Bryant Myers, a professor at Pepperdine University and former Vice President for International Program Strategy at World Vision, has years of experience working around the globe in relief and development work. He explained the need for greater understanding as a means for change when he said, “We see that our worldview, education, and training allow us to see. We need to be aware of this and work hard at seeing *all* there is to see. Having said this, I add a word of caution. I doubt there is or ever will be a unified theory of poverty. There is always more to see and more to learn” (Myers, 2007, p.81). It is a complex issue and one with many problems as well as solutions. NU has entered into this conversation on a global scale with its current curriculum offerings and could be incredibly influential for the poor with a degree focuses on problem solving. Trying to end world poverty, injustice, and environmental decay is no small task but NU is already addressing this issue and could continue to do so by adding this opportunity and help their students continue to “Carry the Call” even after graduation.

To provide education that prepares students to engage with the world and different cultures as the mission states, the university should be helping students answer these questions and provide the education and guidance to discover the answers (Hobbs, et. al., 2008):

- What is my role in the world?
- How can I acquire the skills and experiences that will prepare me for the world of the twenty-first century?
- Do I consider myself a global citizen?

Students need to be engaged internationally. There are ways that NU is already providing opportunities to prepare students for international work which they have seen with great success.

Some of these learning and growing opportunities that work best to prepare students are learning a language, study abroad, and intern internationally – all things that NU currently offers (Hobbs, et. al., 2008). Leveraging these existing opportunities with relevant existing classes and adding global studies classes would be an incredible increase in the value of education at NU and improve its overall current program offerings. This is a benefit both to the university and the students. A student with a global studies background is a valuable asset for employers today who are increasingly expanding international components of their business and are looking for problem solvers and people with the ability to work effectively with people of various cultures (Hobbs, et. al., 2008). Success is dependent on the ability of all of us, especially if we are followers of Christ, to participate as a global community and see each other as brothers and sisters made in God's image, not persons of varying degrees of value and worth. NU seek godly values that challenge students to set aside our own needs to be able to see the entire picture to support the greater good. This is a rare value system and one that NU does incredibly well. They prepare students to respond not only to urgent disasters but the long-suffering disasters of poverty and injustice. On the other hand, the world's response to the needs of the poor and hurting can be quite fickle. We see this most profoundly during times of great tragedy, such as the recent Haiti Earthquake that struck at a magnitude of 7.0 on January 12th, 2010. In a matter of moments, nearly the entire world was united by this tragedy and the desire to help, at least over the next several weeks. Many gave generously of their finances, time, and safety. Unfortunately, most people are only moved during times of sudden disaster. It takes a different kind of person to persevere through disasters that are ongoing such as poverty and injustice. Such a person would be a part of the Global Studies program at NU and be an advocate for the poor during times of immediate crisis as well as the chronic crises of our day. NU has the power to

help shape a student to have the kind of character and values that tackle these issues for the long haul. What a privilege and amazing calling that NU does so well now and could only get better with a program that prepares students for relief and development work.

Global Studies as an Undergraduate Program

The study of globalization, culture, humanitarian intervention, community development, environmental studies, and social justice will prepare students to engage in the world in a variety of disciplines and prepare them for further education. The integration across disciplines is a catalyst for greater understanding and influence in the world. The state of our globe, as we know, is rapidly changing faster than ever. It is also more connected via technology than ever before. A program that prepares students to live out the Gospel for diverse communities in various contexts is greatly needed to overcome poverty and social justice.

According to Myers, who has spent decades tackling the causes of poverty and injustice, explained that there are certain characteristics of a person that will make them a good holistic global practitioner and community developer. He wrote that, “development workers who use being good neighbors as their metaphor for working alongside the poor will do better than those who see themselves as problem-solvers or answer-givers... If we cannot genuinely love our neighbor, where can development begin?” (Myers, 2007, p.150). It takes humility and sensitivity to cultures different from their own to allow persons to engage well with communities around the globe and walk alongside them to develop the answers together and achieve improvements in ways of life (Hobbs, et. al., 2008). The answer to global issues is not only with individuals working with communities abroad. We need to prepare students to work in any field and have a global community mindset.

In addition to a practitioner's character, a great understanding of the issues and how dependent the problems of poverty, injustice, and environmental degradation are to the values and character of the global community. The solutions are connected to global powers such as the economy and government relations. It is important to prepare students for work in the global arena and organizations that are a key component to confronting the issues which include positions such as in business, government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs). There are challenges to engaging with different cultures around the world that students need to learn to be made aware of so that they are better equipped to address the challenges (Hobbs, et. al., 2008). NU has the mission, the values, the resources, and the passion to provide this to students and make such an incredible difference. In an article on international studies and how to prepare students for engagement with the world, it was stated that "we must have ways for students to address the challenges of being a part of the global community by understanding the political world in which they live and the search for security within it, the economic processes of that world and the quest for prosperity, the peoples of the world and their cultural identities, the processes that have emerged at the global level for international cooperation and management, and the global problems that will characterize their future" (Hobbs, et. al., 2008). As students begin to realize their importance of their personal influence on the issues as well as the impact of the global community on the issues, they will begin to see how events and realities around the world impact each other in this complex web and that the solutions are dependent on partnership from all walks of life and at every level of power. According to Hobbs, "perhaps the most important understanding students can gain from International Studies is their connection to the world and the challenge of citizenship in a global age." (Hobbs, et. al., 2008).

It used to be understood that if you wanted to change the world, you work for a non-profit. While non-profits are an important component to combating societal ills, students need to be prepared in any profession as it will likely have some influence on the state of the world – especially as globalization increases. NU prepares its students for a variety of professions. By adding the Global Studies program, NU will further prepare students to have a global community mindset no matter if they work in ministry, for an NGO, or go into medicine, law, or business. They will gain skills in how to work in relief and development as well as business and psychology. To have students prepared to learn how to improve the lives of the poor around the world without assuming a Western approach is a powerful education model. A global studies program can teach students to think critically and expand their understanding of culture. It will develop in students a greater ability to work together for change while protecting the uniqueness of other cultures as God created. This does not discount addressing societal ill specific to a culture. However, it is common for many to believe that the Western worldview, with its wealth and independent values, is the goal for “prosperity” in all cultures when in fact it could be quite different. One of the greatest skills students can develop is how to work with others to help them develop their own solutions poverty and injustice, as well as improving the standard of living for their communities. For example, according to Bryant Myers, one of the most effective ways of improving an impoverished community is by doing what is called a Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) exercise. When done well, “the poor can discover how much they really do know, what resources and skills they already have, and how resourceful they have been in the past. Helping the poor discover that what they know is valuable goes a long way toward helping them overcome their marred identity” (Myers, 2007, p.174). Another tool in development is using the Appreciative Inquiry. Instead of looking for what is not working or what needs fixing, this

approach seeks to determine “what is working, successful, life-giving” in order to expand its existence (Myers, 2007, p.176). Myers relates this approach to the story of God in the Bible whereby He is constantly in the work of redeeming and restoring individuals and their communities to a “good, just, and peaceful” one (Myers, 2007, p.176). These are some of the practices students will learn in a global studies program that can change the way they engage in the world and influence it. Other universities are already engaging in the discussion.

Global Studies at Other Major Universities

There is an increasing demand for a degree in Global Studies around the country that is occurring in secular and faith based universities. (I have journal articles on several programs and the trend is up but specific numbers I have not yet found). Having an education rooted in the Bible is especially powerful for combating the global ills. “Globalization” has intrinsically been associated with economics and the spread of prosperity. However, its history also has roots in social justice issues. To study this field would be a study both in the distribution of wealth through economics but also understand that ramifications of an increasingly globally connected world. In fact, Ife explains the beginnings of an international focus which focused largely on humanity. In the journal article *Localized Needs and a Globalized Economy* (2000), Ife pointed the following:

The internationalist movement, which began towards the end of the nineteenth century, was concerned with other issues such as social justice, world peace, human rights, environmental protection, and so on. It was this spirit of internationalism that led to the establishment of League of Nations, the United Nations (UN), and a host of NGOs such as the Red Cross, Amnesty International, Save the Children, Greenpeace, and many

more. These organizations did not have a primarily economic focus, but saw economic development as needing to serve other goals, involving some vision of the common social needs of humanity.

Several universities, both secular and faith based, are introducing a global studies or international studies degrees as well as more specific degrees in environmental studies to address the global issues of our day. More and more people around the globe are not only recognizing the need for addressing poverty and injustice but believe they can make a difference. The University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) offers a major in Global Studies. Their program is focused on giving “the tools to understand the processes of globalization and their consequences” so that students “are empowered to shape their world as the next generation of global leaders in business, education, government, and the non-profit sector.” The University of California Santa Barbara (UCSB) also offers a major in Global Studies major with the goal to “prepare students for further graduate study in international studies and world affairs, and give them a solid Liberal Arts background for positions that involve decision-making in a changing world. It seeks to instill in the student a solid knowledge of particular cultures, while also providing training in the analysis of global trends --- a way of thinking that will be consistent with the world of the 21st century.” Other universities, such as Columbia University, offer degrees on the environment within their Earth Institute as well as having a special focus on development in economics. Professor at Columbia University, Jeffrey Sachs, also a world renowned economist and special advisor on the Millennium Development Goals - a powerful organization determined to eradicate poverty – teaches students how to influence change and engage with the world. He posed this challenge in his book *Common Wealth: Economics for a Crowded Planet* (2008) when he wrote, “the paradox of a unified global economy and divided global society poses the single greatest

threat to the planet because it makes impossible the cooperation needed to address the remaining challenges” (p.7). For change to occur, it is imperative that we have a global conscious and awareness that leads to action. The more people we have working collectively for global goals and unity, the closer we will be to seeing a difference. NU is already a catalyst for change and their work can become even more effective with global studies courses.

Faith Based Universities with Global Studies Programs

Faith based universities are also increasingly offering a Global Studies program. One of these is a local educator, Pacific Lutheran University (PLU). This program teaches students how to “be sensitive to the historical, multinational, religious, and social roots of diverse cultures, and learn to value and promote global harmony and diplomacy.” Also, Wheaton University, a renowned Christian university, does not offer a Global Studies major but offers a unique 6 month internship for students to do abroad called Human Needs and Global Resources or HNGR. This is a certificate program that supplements their current curriculum. They’re reasons for offering such a program are powerful and very similar to NU’s values and mission:

- People should grow in their ability to think as Christians by integrating biblical perspectives with economic reasoning.
- People should grow in their ability to influence, engage and effect change.
- People should have an increased awareness of and commitment to biblical principles of justice, integrity, servant-hood and stewardship.

Globalization and the Spread of Wealth for Some, Not for Others

Part of sparking the passion for change and advocating for the poor is simply by coming to a better understanding of the enormity of these problems and exploring the root causes. There

exists a complex web of economics, politics, technology, business, and cultures that make it especially hard for the poor, ostracized, oppressed, and downcast. Some of these changes caused by globalization include a polarizing distribution of poverty, power and wealth amongst individuals and countries. What most of us have seen here in the United States and is true for other developed countries, is an unprecedented improvement in the standard of living and increased prosperity. Never before have there been such influential advances in technology, communication, and modernization that have provided increased stability, comfort, and leisure. Never before have those improvements spread as quickly throughout the world as it has now. But for all of these benefits - mostly for those in developed countries – they have come at a cost and that cost has been paid largely by the vulnerable, those from the least developed countries (LDCs).

Countries in Europe and the United States have experienced a dramatic rise in the standard of living that started in 1820 with the advancement of trade and industry (Vasquez, 2002). The progress has happened over the last few decades and increasing most dramatically in the past hundred years. Developing countries are in a much different economic environment. The same infrastructure of business and government that supports a fast paced, highly mobile and technologically connected advantage is not available to the developed countries. Nor is this perhaps the solution to poverty. Though capitalism opens an economy to free trade and competition which allows for an efficient and prosperous economy, there needs to be somewhat of a structure already in place in a country in order for the economy to flourish (Friedman, 2000, pp. 8-9). Friedman once said in a conversation with an American diplomat in 1997 about the Thai economic crisis that "...we're asking Thailand to do in twenty years what it took the United States two hundred years to do." And his colleague replied, "No, no... We're asking them to do it

in one year” (Friedman, 2000, p.390). What took developed countries years to construct is expected in developing countries just entering the global market. The challenges of transitioning into a global economy from a somewhat closed off and lesser developed country can be incredibly difficult. The poor are at a disadvantage for gaining improvements because of the kinds of conditions they are born into and forced to live with unless there is help from outside resources. For students in a Global Studies program, students will ask the question “what does the undeveloped world need and want for a better life?” To assume we have the answer is too narrow of problem solving. Students hungry for global change need a place to debate issues, wrestle with solutions, and seek guidance from knowledgeable professors. A global studies program can focus on tackling Western-view assumptions and better prepare our future leaders to truly engage in the world and make it a better place.

Many Westerners, including economist Jeffrey Sachs, believes that least developed countries (LDC)s will experience “economic growth, poverty reduction, and the reversal of global inequality” much like what was seen over the last two hundred years in now developed countries if they engage in the global economy (Vasquez, 2002). At what cost to their culture and national or tribal identity? Much of the progress made in once developing countries is the result of becoming like the Western world and copying its methods for development. It can be tempting to assume engaging with the global mass economy is the best way to improve. The advantages are quite remarkable. Some of those advantages as well as the circumstances created by them were stated by Friedman (2000) when he wrote:

English is used in almost 80 percent of Web sites, although fewer than one in ten people worldwide speak the language. Industrialized countries hold 97 percent of all patents worldwide. I am certain the Internet and information appliances will spread, and a lot

more quickly than people think, but at the millennium this digital divide is indisputable and it is widening the gap between the rich and the poor. According to the 1999 UN report, the fifth of the world's people living in the highest-income countries has 86 percent of world gross domestic product, 82 percent of world export markets, 68 percent of foreign direct investments and 74 percent of world telephone lines. The bottom fifth, in the poorest countries, has about 1 percent in each of these sectors... By 1995, the richest 20 percent had 82 times as much income [as the poorest 20 percent]. (pp. 305-306).

It is true that developed countries have experienced such growth and prosperity that mass poverty once in those countries has been nearly eliminated (Vasquez, 2002). According to the 1997 United Nations Human Development report as cited in Friedman's book *Lexus and the Olive Tree* (2000), "poverty has fallen more in the past 50 years than in the previous 500. Developing countries have progressed as fast in the past 30 years as the industrialized world did in the previous century. Since 1960, infant mortality rates, malnutrition and illiteracy are all significantly down, while access to safe water is significantly up" (p. 335). Although statistics show hopeful progress for the poor, "the number of poor people has remained stubbornly high at approximately 1.2 billion, and reductions in poverty have been uneven geographically" (Vasquez, 2002). If globalization and modernization can create such positive change, why are countries, especially LDCs, not experiencing the same kind of positive results? Again, it is a complex issue with complex answers.

In an article on International Studies and the Global Community: Transforming the Agenda by Hobbs et. al (confirm how to cite)., they made a wise statement about the complexity of the issues and the power of making these connections through education when it read:

Politics does not exist without economics and students must come to understand the relationship between the two. The world economy has changed in a number of profound ways. The evolution of this economy in terms of the changing role and status of the United States and other state actors, the emergence of transnational economic actors, the roles of financial institutions and corporations in the opening of global markets, the controversies surrounding efforts to promote further integration through free trade and other market opening measures, and the continuing tensions affecting a range of North-South economic relations are all critical. Students must understand the way in which the world economy operates, paying particular attention to its monetary, trade, and investment foundations... key question to be addressed here is how to preserve identity in a world that is challenged by trends toward conformity and homogenization” (Hobbs, et. al., 2008).

The reduction in poverty as a result of globalization is no small achievement. However, many are still living in poverty, more than ever today. Additionally, the risk of becoming a homogenized secular world is no small thing if we are to rely solely on economics to remedy poverty” (Friedman, 2008, p. 147). Students, and the Western culture, would benefit from being educated in globalization and its effects on the poor around the world. There are those who will rationalize that free-market capitalism, when left to its own devices will steer the economy, choices, and values of the people and correct what is broken, namely, that it will eventually bring people out poverty (Friedman, 2000, p. 198). This is a flawed assumption. A free-market capital

economy can be volatile and fragile – delivering devastating conditions to countries unprepared for the modern and fast-paced transition (Friedman, 2000). Renowned economist and professor Joseph Stiglitz wrote in his book *Making Globalization Work* (2006), that “Businesses pursue profits, and that means making money is their first priority... yet corporations have been at the center of bringing the benefits of globalization to the developing countries, helping to raise standards of living throughout much of the world” (p.188). We cannot rely on our current system. We cannot just sit back and wait for change to come. It will not happen unless we engage in the system and evaluate what’s working and what is not so as to become problem-solvers. Globalization integrates a complex web of people, cultures, governments, values, businesses, economies, and technologies with unprecedented efficiency and power. The people of free-market economies and the corporations within them is a powerful force that can influence remarkable change for bringing prosperity to the poor. According to Stiglitz (2002) as cited by Barbera in the journal article *Understanding Globalization* (2006), globalization “has not succeeded in reducing poverty nor ensuring economic stability” (p.6); instead there is a “growing divide between the haves and have-nots” (p.5) that exists within and between countries (2006). The affects of globalization on the least developed countries has not always reached the masses and may not currently have the solution as it is. It needs molding and reshaping.

Stiglitz (2002) forces us to think of our own values, our own concerns, and our worldview when he stated that “the lack of concern about the poor was not just a matter of views of markets and government, views that said that markets would take care of everything and government would only make matters worse; it was also a matter of values – how concerned we should be about the poor and who should bear what risks” (pp. 85-86). Unless people have compassion for the poor and are supportive of implementing plans and processes that would

benefit them, the powerful force of globalization will only expand for profit, not necessarily for the common good.

Global Poverty

Global poverty is one of the worst daily disasters of our day. Today, nearly 1 billion people are without clean drinking water. At any one time, nearly half of all people in developing countries are suffering from a health problem caused by lack of clean water and sanitation (2009 WV Catalog, p.12). XXXX are living below the poverty on less than \$2 per day. There are roughly 15 million children who have lost one or both parents to HIV/AIDS (2010 WV Catalog). We have the greatest number of slaves in our history including child slavery, sexual exploitation, and slave labor.

The values and culture of globalization encourage corporations to make a profit first and consider everything else as secondary. This can lead richer countries to creating demands on the poor and vulnerable countries that inherently benefit the interests of the richer countries. In fact, Stiglitz claimed that even free trade agreements, such as the North American Free Trade Agreement that appeared to benefit the poorer countries and to equalize competition, was created to increase protection for the richer countries (2002). Stiglitz added that “In the fine print, however, these agreements and treaties offer the possibility for rich nations to dump their excess products on poor nations, without the possibility for reciprocity” (2002). Depending on corporations to increase the standard of living for the poor is not the only option and may not be the best option for developing countries.

How the Poor Can Help Themselves with Foreign Aid

According to Sachs, “The poor know what to do but are too poor to do it. Since they can’t meet their immediate needs (food, safe water, health care) they also can’t afford to save and invest for their future. That is where foreign assistance comes in. A temporary boost of aid over the course of several years, if properly invested, can lead to a permanent rise in productivity. That boost, in turn, leads to self-sustaining growth.” The chain of events that are expected to occur when temporary aid is given begins with relief from temporary aid, a boost of productivity, a rise in savings and investments, and finally sustainable growth (Sachs, 2008, p. 229). Below are a number of solutions Sachs (2008) recommended for creating a quick impact on the poor to get them started on the path to sustainable development. They are:

- Improved access to clean water
- Controlling disease through anti-malarial bed nets and essential medications
- Opening and reopening schools
- Establishing comprehensive school feeding programs to improve nutrition and education outcomes
- Increasing agricultural productivity through the mass distribution of improved seeds, fertilizers, and tools
- Improving livestock health
- Creating food-for-work or labor-intensive construction programs for roads, bridges, repair
- Construction of buildings (pp.251-252)

It is interesting to note that there are least developed countries that are experiencing increased prosperity. Jeffrey Sachs, Nobel Prize winner and renowned economist explained the causes of such success when he explained that “the most important determinant, it seems, is food

productivity. Countries that started with high cereal yields per hectare, and that used high levels of fertilizer input per hectare, are the poor countries that tended to experience economic growth (Sachs, 2005, p.69). Global Studies students can study this improvement as well and be able to evaluate true success as based on criteria, depending on the specific cultures, to what success truly means. There's no question that increased access to food, water, shelter, and health is a benefit to any culture. However, at what cost? In the process, did a culture lose their identity? Did they trade their own for a Western view so as to enter the global market? These are difficult questions and the answers can be even more challenging. Myers had stated, there is a cycle of poverty that keep the least developed countries poor. Equally, there can be a cycle of prosperity. It is likely then, that if developing countries are given foreign aid to impact food productivity and other influential determinants of prosperity, the poor could help themselves and contribute to the prosperity of their community and country. The best solutions for these problems and how to preserve a cultures ethnic identity in the process is a challenge, but one incredibly valuable to contend with.

Entering the global economy does not automatically guarantee success for a community or country. In many of the developing countries “that have begun opening their economies, flawed policies, the lack of reform, and other manifestations of the statist past have led to crisis and to disillusionment with the free market” (Vasquez, 2002). The causes of such disparity in progress can be understood by various contributions and the cycle that plagues the poor to remain in the same state of poverty. Robert Chambers, an expert in rural development, explained an example of how the cycle of poverty keeps the poor in the same desperate state of survival in his book *Rural Development: Putting the Last First* (1983) when he wrote:

Poverty contributes to physical weakness through lack of food, small bodies, malnutrition leading to low immune response to infections, and inability to reach or pay for health services; to isolation because of the inability to pay the cost of schooling, to buy a radio or a bicycle, to afford travel to look for work, or to live near the village centre or a main road; to vulnerability through lack of assets to pay large expenses or to meet contingencies; and to powerlessness because lack of wealth goes with low status: the poor have no voice. (p.112).

In addition, economist Stiglitz who attributed globalization to rising standards of living, also points out the challenges of eradicating extreme poverty in the least developed countries (LDCs). Stiglitz (2005) stated that:

LDCs are characterized by their exposure to a series of vulnerabilities and constraints, such as limited human capital and productive capacity; weak institutions; geographical handicaps including poor soils, vulnerability to natural disasters, and communicable diseases; poorly diversified industries and underdeveloped markets for many goods and services; limited access to education, health, and other social services; poor infrastructure; and lack of access to information and communication technologies. (p.87).

Global Injustice

The issue of social justice and human trafficking for slavery is an enormous problem. In fact, it is a \$32 billion dollar industry! After drugs and weapons, human trafficking is the world's third largest criminal enterprise (U.S. Department of State). It has been a catalyst for spreading AIDS at a devastating rate (IJM, 2007). Women and girls make up approximately 80 percent of all victims of human trafficking victims, and up to 50 percent of those trafficked are

minors (U.S. Department of State). According to UNICEF, roughly 2 million children, most of them girls, are enslaved in the global slave trade (UNICEF, from IJM website). An estimated 600,000 to 800,000 children, women and men are coerced or forcefully taken from their home country and trafficked across international borders every year (U.S. Department of State).

According to the International Justice Mission, a Christian NGO that rescues men, women, and children from slave labor and sexual exploitation, explained that sex trafficking is a “massive global enterprise.” Essentially, there are many who are making hundreds, thousands, perhaps even millions of dollars by buying and selling human beings “based upon force, coercion and deception.” It’s a booming industry. Innocent women and girls are forced through rape and forceful exploitation for profit (IJM, 2007). It’s a complex and highly sophisticated industry of indescribable evil. It is also a highly profitable business that is very difficult to combat. There is a huge need for advocacy for these victims. One organization, IJM exists to rescue victims from slavery, put the exploiters in jail, and advocate for laws that make the human trafficking business more difficult to operate without steep consequences in the hopes of dissuading potential perpetrators (IJM, 2007). Brian McLaren, an outspoken Christian who advocates for radical justice said, “It is not the hunger for domination through competition that will save us, Jesus teaches. We must grow beyond that crude level so that we hunger and thirst for justice. When we realize that justice is about the right use of power, it becomes clear how much Jesus has to say on the subject” (McLaren,2007, p.217).

Global Environmental Issues

The increased prosperity and technological advances have influenced what scientists call global change, which includes changes to the environment that encompass all conditions including climate change, pollution, land use change, ozone depletion, etc (EPA). The issues of

environmental justice will be an issue for as long as we consume at the rate we are or at least as long as the earth is able to sustain life and it is pertinent that it be studied. The effects of our increased standard of living have created tragic abuses to our planet. For example, on average over 40 million tons of hazardous waste have been produced in the United States annually by our modern way of life (<http://www.epa.gov/ebtpages/wasthazardouswaste.html>). Most of this waste has come from large industrial facilities which include chemical manufacturers, electroplating companies, petroleum refineries, and other everyday places such as the dry cleaners, auto repair shops, hospitals, exterminators and photo processing centers (<http://www.epa.gov/ebtpages/wasthazardouswaste.html>).

Additionally, research shows that the climate is changing and overall, the globe is warming by an average warming of about 1.3°F (0.74°C) over the past century. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) scientists attribute these changes to greenhouse gas emissions by humans with a greater than 90 percent chance the change. Surprisingly, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) claims that seven of the eight warmest years on record have occurred since 2001. In fact, increases in temperatures in our Earth's atmosphere can contribute to changes in global climate patterns. While the overall climate is warming, the changes in the weather patterns are growing increasingly erratic and unpredictable. The more the earth warms, the more erratic the weather patterns will become. This is devastating because even the slightest change can hurt fragile ecosystems as well as cause more frequent and powerful floods, hurricanes, and droughts (EPA Basic Fact Sheet <http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/fq/science.html>). The poor are the most vulnerable. How many more natural disasters such as the South East Asia tsunami of 2004 and Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans can we withstand? How much more frequent will these become?

Additionally, the poor are the most powerless to advocate for protection against toxic waste dumping in their land and waters. With such a powerful infrastructure of governments and businesses backing the advancement of their own people in developed countries, it takes creative, humble, patient, and knowledgeable persons to address the issues facing the globe and attempting to make it an inhabitable and hospitable place to live for all people now and in generations to come. These changes are increasing dramatically and the poor are incredibly vulnerable to erratic weather conditions such droughts, torrential rains, flooding, and land slides. For people in LDCs, one of these conditions could mean life or death for their entire community. For others, it can set them back deeper into a cycle of poverty and despair. The developed world has a responsibility to the waste emitted into the air and in the ground. According to the EPA, these changes “are occurring due to natural conditions but more and more so from human activities that change the atmosphere’s makeup (e.g, burning fossil fuels) and the land surface (e.g., cutting down forests, planting trees, building developments in cities and suburbs, etc.)” (EPA website, 2010). At the current rate of consumption of our most valuable resources, most of which are not renewable, we are setting ourselves up for disaster. The poor are the ones experiencing it first.

Our students need to be made aware of these issues and there aren’t many opportunities for them to discuss these issues. Education can lead to advocating for change that will save lives in the present and centuries to come. Conservation International biodiversity expert, Thomas Brooks, told Thomas Friedman in his Book *Hot, Flat, and Crowded*, that “It is even within our grasp to reverse climate change. But extinctions are irreversible... Once a species is gone, it is lost forever” (Friedman, 2008, p.151). Friedman continued to say that although we are not depended on directly by plants and animals for survival, “we depend on this whole web of life

for our survival” (Friedman, 2008, p.152). Our relationship with the environment does however, have an impact on their survivability. We have to innovate our way out of these problems and develop systems and approaches to reverse the effects of climate change.

What the Bible Says About Injustice

Working alongside the poor is a challenging task and often slow to see progress against poverty and injustice. The long road can seem impossible. For the poor themselves who have been stuck in an environment that tells them they're worthless, the road seems even longer and more impossible. Myers pointed out that “The poor have been taught to believe that they are supposed to be slaves or that it is part of the scheme of things that they should do the work of untouchable or bonded laborers. They do not believe they are intended to be creative and productive stewards. To poverty of being we must add poverty of purpose” (Myers, 2007, p.110). This is precisely what God's word asks of all of us and calls us to teach the rich and the poor. The rich often have an incorrect and unbiblical view of the poor. Jayakumar Christian, author and National Director for World Vision India, “expresses little sympathy for the non-poor because of the way they participate in the disempowering systems that create and sustain poverty when they play god in the lives of the poor” (Myers, 2007, p.110). Myers goes on to say that “the non-poor suffer from an overinflated view of who they are when they play god in the lives of the poor. They also have forgotten their true vocation when they use their gifts not to serve but to control and oppress” (Myers, 2007, p.110). Working with the poor from a biblical perspective may take some new learning and relearning of untruthful ways of thinking so as to empower the poor and bring back the dignity that was once stolen from them. Take the passages from Luke 4:18-19 when Jesus read from the book of Isaiah. He stated that He came for the poor and the non-poor when he said:

The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

Myers explained that one of the great challenges in development is to “challenge the captivity of the poor to the belief that they cannot change their present reality” (Myers, 2007, p.107). “The development response changes accordingly from feeding people to empowering communities, to developing sustainable social systems, and finally to mobilizing people’s movements” (Myers, 2007, p.97). The battle of poverty and injustice is not just a battle for the tangibles of food, water, shelter, health, and freedom. It is a battle for all of us to deem all of humanity as made in God’s image and following Jesus in the way He taught us which was to bring the Good News of His Kingdom to all. Not just the rich. Not just the poor. But all.

Martin Luther King wrote a powerful letter from the Birmingham jail that challenges us to live out the call collectively for a global community. He wrote:

I am in Birmingham because injustice is here. Just as the prophets of the eighth century B.C. left their villages and carried their "thus saith the Lord" far beyond the boundaries of their home towns, and just as the Apostle Paul left his village of Tarsus and carried the gospel of Jesus Christ to the far corners of the Greco-Roman world, so am I compelled to carry the gospel of freedom beyond my own home town. Like Paul, I must constantly respond to the Macedonian call for aid... Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. Never again can we afford to live with the narrow, provincial "outside agitator" idea.... Lamentably, it is

an historical fact that privileged groups seldom give up their privileges voluntarily. Individuals may see the moral light and voluntarily give up their unjust posture; but, as Reinhold Niebuhr has reminded us, groups tend to be more immoral than individuals. We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed. Frankly, I have yet to engage in a direct-action campaign that was "well timed" in the view of those who have not suffered unduly from the disease of segregation. For years now I have heard the word "Wait!"... A just law is a man-made code that squares with the moral law or the law of God. An unjust law is a code that is out of harmony with the moral law... (King, 1963).

Conclusion: University as a Catalyst for Change Against Societal Ills

The problem of global poverty, social injustice, and environmental degradation will be issues in our world as long as we do not make it a priority to defeat. As Friedman stated, "We can't ignore these problems and we don't want to just leave them to the marketplace to solve.... understand in a world of networks, individuals, companies, communities, consumers, activist groups and governments all have the power to be shapers – to shape human value chains... It requires a radical new way of thinking..." (Friedman, 2000, p. 198). The question remains - are people concerned about the poor? Are you concerned for the poor? Are you concerned for all of humanity? Globalization will continue to make our world more connected and more dependent on the global world than ever before. If done right, globalization can be the stimulus for changing the world and eradicating poverty "if allowed to be tamed by human rights requirements... Until then, the struggle must continue" (Ilesanmi, 2004). We are each called to contribute to society in some way and to use our voices to advocate for a better world. Jeffrey Sachs pleads this case best when he said:

Each of us is, at least potentially, a node of a truly global network in which we help weave together diverse traditions, areas of knowledge, and cultural pursuits on the global tapestry. We are each potential shapers of a global society that can share values and address common global challenges...As individuals, our most important responsibility is a commitment to know the truth as best we can, truth that is both technical and ethical...with an empathy that enables us to understand the plight of the poor, the dispossessed, the young without hope, or the rural communities challenged by bewildering change” (2008, pp. 335-336).

There is an increasingly growing need for a program in Global Studies at Northwest University. The impact of globalization will continue to evolve, change, and expand. To instigate sustainable change for the globe, it will be imperative that we understand how we do business, practice medicine, and implement justice as well as how we can steer those powerful forces in a direction that is sustainable and provides an environment for “life in all its fullness.” As Christians, we are drawn to confront these issues. As a university with a “Call” and already active in reaching the poor, a Global Studies program would provide our students, the future leaders, to create change. They will be knowledgeable of the state of our world so that they can create opportunities for improvements. As a Christian university, students are challenged by the Gospel of Jesus to think about the needs of the poor and oppressed in order to work collectively in a world that is becoming increasingly dependent on all countries working together for the common good. “The mission of higher education indeed should be political--that the goal should be, not the pursuit of ‘objective’ truth, but nothing less than a fundamental transformation of society” Martin, J. (1993, p. X). This is what a Global Studies degree can do for the world. For the sake of the struggling and surviving poor - the men, women, and children who have little

chance of a better future - I hope that more people will join together and be a part of something that will change the lives of not only the current generation, but all those that follow. Change may begin with one person's compassion, but collectively, we can change the course of history and promote a better world. Northwest University is already pursuing this goal, and quite successful. Adding a Global Studies program will make their current offering even stronger, provide unique opportunities for our students to tackle poverty and injustice, and provide the university with a unique and sought after degree.

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