

Lilly Calling

THE LILLY GRANT PROGRAM AT ST. OLAF COLLEGE NEWSLETTER | MAY 2007

International Service-Learning 2007

Hallelujah Honduras: Vocation and International Service Organizations



David Wagner

La Iglesia Cristiana Luterana de Honduras will host staff member David Wagner '03, Assistant Director of Annual Giving, and six current St. Olaf students during a three-week service-

learning trip to Honduras this June. Alumna Lindsay Mack '02 will facilitate the experience in Honduras, which will focus on service to congregations and communities throughout the country.

Service learning will involve volunteering with the *Health for Life* program, leading and participating in worship, working with youth and women's groups, engaging in fellowship, participating in educational programming sponsored by churches, volunteering at a

local kindergarten, and interacting with pastors and leaders in local communities. Students will have the opportunity to reflect on personal vocation by journaling, leading conversations, and facilitating educational activities that are related to their own area of study.

The group will travel extensively throughout the country to develop awareness of the different roles that the Lutheran Church and other organizations play in working with communities and dealing with different social issues in the diverse regions. A



wide range of experiences throughout the country will broaden the perspective of the program so students can explore connections to their personal vocation in varied settings. While it would be possible for the group to stay in

one place, it will enhance the students' experience to encounter a breadth of communities and congregations throughout Honduras.



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Summer Vocational Community Internships 5 Years and Running!

Seven St. Olaf students will spend the summer serving in urban congregations in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area and living at Luther Seminary in the fifth year of this exciting Lilly Grant Program. The churches in which the students will serve are noted for being active and involved in their communities, and relish the summer infusion of talent and enthusiasm the students bring. Once again this year Randy Nelson, Director of Contextual Education, will serve as our site facilitator to enhance the summer experience and provide insight, advice, a sounding board and direction for students to think through the experience and its meaning to their lives and callings.

Congratulations to this year's interns:

Erin Armstrong
Galilee

Kathleen Larochele
Our Saviour's

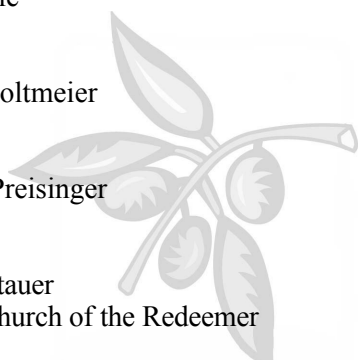
Abigail Matthews
Augustana

Denise Mille
Redeemer

Jonathan Holtmeier
Calvary

Nathaniel Preisinger
Gloria Dei

Peter Schattauer
Lutheran Church of the Redeemer



Summertime Faith and Fellowship: Working at Bible/Church Camps

Spending the summer as a camp counselor or leader is not the most financially lucrative endeavor for a college student, but other aspects of the experience are often extremely rewarding. Working at camp can be a wonderful way for students to learn about their gifts, what they enjoy, and ultimately help them determine their life's vocation.



This was the expressed desire of applicant Nan Onkka, who wrote: "A goal of mine this summer is to come to a better understanding of the work I would like to do after college. Do I truly enjoy working with high school students? Or might my personality match better with children or adults? Do I enjoy an alternative learning environment? Or will I wish for a traditional classroom setting? Do my strengths lie in group leadership? Or might I be better behind-the-scenes? These questions probably won't be answered over the course of one summer, but I am confident that my summer work will begin to clarify who I am and who I want to become."

The Lilly program is gratified to have been able to offer stipends to 14 St. Olaf students to help offset their financial sacrifice in choosing to spend the summer at camp, learning and sharing. Congratulations to Amy, Behrens, Jared Brandell, Sarah Frank, Katherine (Kate) Hagen, Anna Helgen, Anna Johnson, Linnea Johnson, Martina Link, Sally McClintock, Sarah Meyer, Nan Onkka, Carl Sauey, Frieda M. von Qualen, and Trygve Wastvedt.

Lilly Funds Help Ole Spring Relief Students Turn Actions To Thoughts

St. Olaf students traveled to New Orleans over spring break as participants in the second Ole Spring Relief. And, for the second time, the Lilly Grant Program contributed to the effort with funds delegated to practices and events to help students reflect upon the experience. "After last year," noted Ishanaa Rambachan '08, "the students realized a distinct need for mechanisms to process the experience." Student organizers submitted a proposal outlining the following activities designed to help volunteers think about the emotional and cognitive impact of the trip and its meaning for their lives:

- ◆ A Wednesday night Lenten service at Atonement Church, followed by dinner with the community and discussion of the recovery effort and the week's work
- ◆ A Friday night talent show that combined fun and reflection
- ◆ Nightly discussion sessions with two seminarians from Luther Seminary and Vesper services

As Original Lilly Grant Program Nears End, Evaluation With An Eye To The Future

As St. Olaf nears the end of its 5-year Lilly Grant Program, "Lives of Worth and Service," we have begun the important task of evaluating the impact of the program. In addition to being an important component of our final report to the Lilly Endowment, this evaluation will provide guiding information as we design ongoing vocational discernment programs during the 3-year Lilly Sustainability Grant and maintain and enrich a community culture of vocational discernment for the years thereafter.

Most of the evaluation will be undertaken during academic year 2007-08, but the process began this spring. We wanted to be sure to gain the insights and reactions of the Class of '07, the first class to benefit fully from the Lilly Grant Program.

Thomas Rusert '06 has been interviewing students from this year's graduating class to gather personal assessments of the impact the program has had during their four years at St. Olaf. Here's what he had to say about the process so far:

• Each interview has brought new insight to the diverse and deep sense of vocation that the student participants have developed during their experience at St. Olaf. •

-Thomas Rusert '06

"Students are coming to life in this evaluation process! Each interview has brought new insight to the diverse and deep sense of vocation that the student participants have developed during their experience at St. Olaf and in the Lilly funded programs. Our conversations have been full of both reflection and revelation. Matt Lemanski '07 sincerely suggested that we continue the evaluation in a "10-years later" interview. As vocational discernment continues at St. Olaf over the next decade I imagine students like Matt continuing to enrich this dynamic exercise of reflection and revelation."

2007-2008 Lilly Vocational Scholars

For academic year 2007-08 we are fortunate to have two Lilly Vocational Scholars. Each will receive release time of one course each semester to pursue academic scholarship on the vocational topics within their field and to provide inspiration and intellectual leadership to the campus community in the consideration of vocation.

• I think that it will be wonderful to have both Carol and Dan thinking and writing and speaking about different dimensions of vocation. •

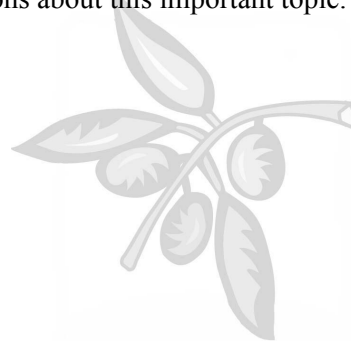
-James Farrell, 2006-07 Lilly Vocational Scholar

Dan Hofrenning, Political Science

Professor Hofrenning's work will involve several related threads of inquiry. He plans to replicate research from his earlier interim course on the vocation of citizenship and politics. He will also expand his preliminary research into the political participation and students' feelings of efficacy and cynicism. Both of these investigations will help inform scholarly inquiry and practical programming addressing ways in which St. Olaf fosters a vocation of citizenship and politics within its student body.

Carol Holly, English

Professor Holly's work will include an expansion of her ongoing research into 19th-century New England writer, Rose Terry Cooke. Holly will examine, among other things, the vocation of writing and the role of religion in 19th-century literature. Holly will also formalize some of her existing explorations into teaching as a vocation by reflecting on her own experiences, interviewing colleagues, and engaging the community in conversations about this important topic.





Pigs and the Prodigal Son

By Lilly Vocational Scholar Jim Farrell

James Farrell, Professor of History, Chair of the History Department, and Director of American Studies, has undertaken two interrelated projects as part of his Vocational Scholar activities: 1) work on a book, *The Nature of College*, in which he hopes to "help students discover what they value — personally and culturally — and why," and 2) an essay, "All-Consuming Vocation: The Work of Consumption," in which he plans to expand the notion of vocation from the traditional understanding of being "called to serve" to include being "called to con-serve and pre-serve."

The following chapel talk, given April 23, 2007, relates to his Lilly research and writing on the idea of consumption as vocation.

There was a man who had two sons. The younger one told his father that he couldn't wait for him to die, and that he wanted his share of the estate now. So Dad divided his property between the two sons. The younger son took his share and blew it all in wild living in a foreign country. After he had squandered his whole fortune, there was a severe famine in that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to a farmer, who put him to work caring for pigs. The young man was so hungry that he wanted to eat the slop that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything. So he headed home.

While he was still a long way off, his father spotted him and was filled with compassion. So he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him. The son said to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son."

But the father said to his servants, "Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fatted calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found." So they began to celebrate. As you might imagine, the older brother was not too thrilled and refused to join them at the party. So his father went out and pleaded, but the older brother was not convinced "You must be out of your mind," he said. "All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. But you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. And then when this son of yours who has squandered your fortune with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fatted calf for him!"

"My son," the father said, "you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and now he is alive again; he was lost and is found."

I'm the oldest brother in my family, so I have a peculiar relationship to this story. I know it's about

repentance and forgiveness, about justice and mercy, about law and love. But, frankly, it's still not fair. It's also not fair, when you think about it, to the fatted calf. But, lucky for you, I don't really want to talk about that today. Instead I want to talk about the younger brother and the pigs.

The younger brother is us, the prodigal sons and daughters of a Creator who gave us first a planet and then a savior as a gift. The word prodigal means "recklessly wasteful and extravagant," and as the recent reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change suggest, the people of the so-called developed world have practiced prodigality from the beginning of the industrial revolution until now. One reason for the wastefulness of the over-developed world is that we have an under-developed sense of stewardship, which gets us to the pigs.

The root of the word "stewardship" is the Middle English word "sty," which is an enclosure for pigs. At first, a steward was simply the keeper of swine. Eventually, the word involved broader responsibilities, and the steward became the keeper of the hall. As we now understand it, a steward is a person who takes good care of something that belongs to someone else. And in a religious sense, a steward is a person who takes care of God's creation, since all of it is God's, including us.

So the first lesson of stewardship—and a hard one in a culture of capitalism, consumerism and private property—is that we don't own anything. It's all God's, and when we bend nature or human nature from God's purposes to our own, we're not stewards but thieves. Genesis 2:15 suggests that we're called "to till and keep" the earth. But as Larry Rasmussen points out in *Earth Community, Earth Ethics*, a better translation requires us to "serve and preserve" the creation—and not just the "natural resources" that serve and preserve us. As stewards, we can consume nature, but we can't pig it all. As stewards, we can take from nature, but only if we always *take care*.

A second lesson of stewardship is that, etymologically at least, we're called—like the younger brother—to take care of pigs. For most of us, this is not an attractive career choice—or even a practical one, since pigs are now manufactured, more or less, on factory farms. But if we go looking for the biggest pigs on the planet, we actually don't need to look any further than the mirror. Currently, human beings use more than 40 percent of the biologically productive capacity of the earth for themselves. And Americans consume collectively more than anybody else in the world. Just five percent of the world's population, we consume about 25 percent of the world's resources. Like the younger brother, we take too much, in part because we take so much for granted.

So maybe we should consider stewardship in its original sense, and think of our responsibilities to be keepers of pigs—pigs who, in this case, happen to be ourselves.

In this definition, a steward would be someone who watches over the piggishness of human beings, and who tries to manage it for the good of God's creation. Such stewardship involves the management of natural resources, but also the management of cultural resources, especially the cultural resources that conserve natural resources. Colleges and universities have traditionally served as stewards of cultural traditions, and they're desperately needed again today, when the cult of novelty and a culture of consumption relentlessly replace the tried and true with the "new and improved."

As cultural stewards, we need to take care of our piggishness by cultivating cultural values that cultivate restraint. In *Earth Community, Earth Ethics*, Larry Rasmussen suggests that stewardship is intimately connected to Sabbath. He suggests that Creation culminates not on the sixth day, when Adam and Eve are created, but on the seventh day, when Adam and Eve learn how to leave creation alone. The Sabbath, then, is not just a day of rest for people; it's a day of rest for the rest of creation. It's a day of restraint, a day of re-creation, a day in which we watch the world grow without our interference, a day in which we humbly acquiesce to God's creative complexity. As stewards of the creation, therefore, our first duty is to learn how nature works, and then to figure out how to work with it.

As cultural stewards, we need to take care of our piggishness by telling stories about taking less, stories that counter the acquisitive nature of our culture. For more than a century, we've lived in a society of conspicuous consumption. Now it's time for a culture of conspicuous frugality. Instead of praising each other for our new purchases, it's time to exert peer pressure in favor of restraint, repair, and renewal. For

more than a century, we've marveled at what people *can* do—and we've done it, with disastrous results. Now, it's time to marvel at what people choose *not* to do.

As cultural stewards, we need to take care of our piggishness by cultivating *institutions* that can shape communities for the common good, including the common good of all God's creatures. In the 20th century, we cultivated supermarkets and shopping centers and Wal-Mart. In the 21st century, we need to cultivate co-ops and repair shops and local businesses. In the 20th century, we cultivated an institutional infrastructure for cars and carbon consumption. In the 21st century, we need to cultivate institutions that replace fossil fuels with other energies, including our own. In the 20th century, we cultivated a politics of distrust, division and denial. In the 21st century, we'll need to cultivate a politics of permanence based on common work for the common good. In the 20th century, we cultivated an economics of unlimited growth. In the stewardship century, we'll need to cultivate what Bill McKibben calls a "deep economy"—one that looks not to the bottom line, but to the bottom half, where the endangered species—both human and natural—cry out for economic development based on harmonizing human development with the natural rhythms of the beautiful blue-green planet. In the 20th century, we cultivated our hubris, with disastrous results. In the 21st century, it's time for humility, and the attentiveness to natural cycles that it allows. In short, the 20th century was the age of the so-called "economic miracle." But the 21st century will be the age of the ecological revolution, nesting the human economy gently within nature's economy.

To put it another way, in the 21st century, stewardship becomes vocation and vice versa. All of our work—including the work of consumption, where most Americans change the world most dramatically—must, in the words of Genesis, serve and conserve the gardens of creation. Our vocation isn't just what we get paid for—it's what we do in our lives to serve the common good, and the *commons good*, the good of the global commons that we share with all of God's glorious creatures. And that might mean that an essential part of our vocation today is to create the vocations of tomorrow by transforming public policy and the economy so that people *do get paid* to serve and conserve God's creation. Instead of providing perverse subsidies to corporations that undermine the health of natural communities, including our own, we might direct public money—the money of "we the people"—to projects of restoration and regeneration.

At the beginning of the ecological revolution of the 21st century, we all have work to do. We have pigs—and piggishness—to take care of.

Amen.

Another World Is Possible If We Re-Inhabit The One We Have

“Coming to St. Olaf, I had the idea that my college education would broaden my perspective to a point where it eventually included “the universe.” College held the promise of providing a space to tackle the big, universal questions—questions of meaning, value, ethics—as well as to ultimately discern how we can make a difference in the world and improve upon that which we find lacking. I have explored these “big” questions throughout my college education; but interestingly, these “big” questions have increasingly led me to “small” things. Or so it would seem. Through my study of the environment at St. Olaf, I have prepared myself for a life of worth and service based upon this principle: another world is possible if we re-inhabit the one we have.”

—excerpt from Mary Sotos’ first-place entry

Congratulations to Essay Contest Winners!

The Lilly Endowment sponsored an essay contest asking students to respond to the question: As a student at St. Olaf College, how are you preparing to live a life of worth and service that demonstrates Another World is Possible? The second place winner was Jenny Kramm and third place went to Carl Samuelson. For the full text of all three essays visit <http://www.stolaf.edu/lillyprogram/events/index.html>



First Place Winner
Mary Sotos

Oles Witness the Many Faces of Vocation on Washington, D.C., Trip

To Merrie Benasutti, associate director of service and civic leadership in St. Olaf’s Center for Experiential Learning, Ben’s Chili Bowl is an icon of vocation, and was the perfect place for her and six St. Olaf students to kick-off an Interim break trip that focused on public and social service work in the capitol.



"Ben's is a wonderful example of someone finding their vocation, expressed through sticking with the neighborhood through decades of changes and turmoil. What they've done for the neighborhood is incredible," says Benasutti, whose goal for the trip was to help students reflect broadly upon the notion of vocation through exposure to direct service, community-based organizing, and national and international policy-making.

The itinerary for the St. Olaf trip led students from a homeless shelter one mile from the White House to meetings with nonprofit and faith-based groups to the White House and congressional voting floor.

Laurel Osman '07 wrote this about the trip in a thank you letter to the Lilly Program Committee:

“The aim of our trip was to explore vocation and the way fellow Oles discovered their ‘calling’ in D.C. During our stay, Merrie read us a quote by Buechner. In a sermon, he writes that vocation is “the place where the heart’s deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.” Before the trip, I assumed this definition of vocation only applied to people working in a religious sector, but I was wrong. Vocation encompasses the totality of your being, your life, your time, your passions, your hopes and aspirations; in a word, it encompasses your *soul*. I job shadowed an alum, Matt Newland, and discovered how he followed his passions, which led him to a career in loving service to others. I was inspired by his ability to take all the things which interested him . . . and not make a killing or a living, but rather a *life* out of them.”

Teaching Fellows: Broadening the Concept of Vocation

Each year, the Lilly Program supports faculty efforts to integrate vocational discernment into the campus culture with the Teaching Fellows program. Through the program, faculty members can receive one course release to reflect upon and prepare teaching and other materials that help students and the entire campus community to think about the integration of their values, gifts, loves, work, and lives. These Lilly Teaching Fellows are involved in ongoing conversations evolving from the Lilly Grant Program, *Lives of Worth and Service*.

This semester the teaching fellows found time (not without some difficulty) to get together for breakfast and conversation on three occasions. The purpose of the meetings is to give the Lilly fellows an opportunity to learn about the work each is doing, share information, solicit and offer suggestions, and basically serve as sounding board and brainstorming partners. Here's a glimpse at part of one of those conversations:

Eric Fure-Slocum told the group about the history course he was developing, tentatively titled "Work in America," intended to explore dignity and work. In the course, students would use primary materials and oral histories to explore dignity, its moral meanings, and how it has been contested and changed over time. The course would examine the workplace and the culture of work, how policy-makers have reacted, and organized responses that have taken place. A second component of the course would be portrayals of workers in art. Eric then asked for feedback and suggestions. They flowed from one to the other, and included practical advice, some based on past experience, further ideas for areas of inquiry, and perspectives from different disciplines.

Lilly Teaching Fellows 2006-2007

Doug Casson ~ Political Science

Eric Fure-Slocum ~ History

Rebecca Judge ~ Economics/Environmental Studies

Dolores Peters ~ History

Mary Trull ~ English

Doug Casson ~ Political Science

Lilly Teaching Fellows 2007-2008

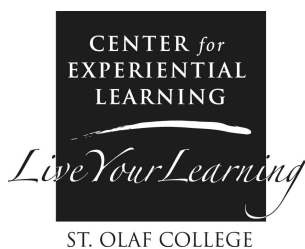
Diane LeBlanc ~ English

Mark Pernecky ~ Economics

Tom Williamson ~ Sociology/Anthropology

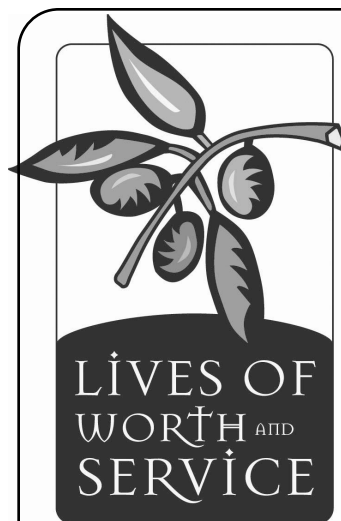
Here are some of the remarks that spun out of this conversation and discussion of other teaching fellow courses:

- ▶ Students might interview staff on campus to learn the infrastructure of their environment and the often-invisible work that goes into creating and maintaining it.
- ▶ Students might examine other types of invisible work, such as work that has traditionally been regarded as "women's work."
- ▶ Part of a person's sense of dignity rises from one's perception of themselves in relation to others.
- ▶ Vocation is often no longer connected to work, yet one would hope that work would be a living out of one's vocation. In the late 19th and early 20th century, work started to become separate from vocation.
- ▶ TGIF is the great national interdenominational prayer, yet most people say they actually enjoy their work. How, then, do you get people to speak honestly about their work?
- ▶ When you price something, you change its value. When people start working at something they enjoy—for pay—they often start not enjoying it.
- ▶ Planning early for work/vocation is now part of middle/upper-middle class lives, and many careers require years of concentrated study, years in which it becomes easy to lose sight of what it was that made you want to pursue this career in the first place. How do you keep your sights on your intrinsic vocational motivation through years of study that may be very narrow?"
- ▶ For a good read on this general subject and on how a Navajo surgeon combined a career in medicine with her ethnic heritage, the book *Scalpel and the Silver Bear* was recommended.



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Lilly Grant Program
Lives of Worth and Service



In December of 2002, St. Olaf College received a grant of nearly two million dollars from the Lilly Endowment's Program on the Theological Exploration of Vocation. This grant supports a five-year program at St. Olaf, *Lives of Worth and Service*.

St. Olaf is built on the conviction that life is more than a livelihood, and orients all that it does toward fostering the development of the whole person in mind, body, and spirit. *Lives of Worth and Service* furthers this tradition by creating an intentional, campus-wide approach to consideration of the meaning of "vocation" and the discernment of each individual's vocation.

For more information on the Lilly Grant Program please visit:
www.stolaf.edu/lillyprogram/

