

CGCM News

Center for Global Christianity & Mission

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BU Makes a Strong Showing at the ASM Eastern Meeting

Mission Meets Development:



Boston University Delegation to the Eastern Fellowship, 2013
Left to Right: Laura Chevalier, Gun Cheol Kim, Michele Sigg, Daryl Ireland, Dr. Dana Robert, Jean Luc Enyegue, Jeremy Hegi, Younghwa Kim, Dan Bk

The annual meeting of the American Society of Missiology's Eastern Fellowship is the oldest gathering of missiologists in North America. The meeting is at the cutting edge of missiological scholarship and practice. Boston University had an important role in shaping the discussion with eight student participants, along with CGCM Director Dr. Dana Robert, who coordinated the meeting. Most recently, meetings have been convened at the Maryknoll Mission Institute in New York in November. A. Scott Moreau, Professor of Missions and Intercultural Studies at Wheaton College, posed the question "Evangelicals and Contextualization: Oxymoron, Uneasy Relationship, or Energetic Experiment?" to the American Society of Missiology's Eastern Fellowship of Professors of Mission....

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Mission and Development Course and Panel Sheds Light on Non-Profit Service

Dr. Elizabeth Parsons, Lecturer in Religion and Development and a Resident Scholar with the CGCM, taught an exciting course this spring on the intersection of mission and development. The course, called Enacting Mission Through NGO and FBO Work, covered a variety of issues related to work in non-governmental, non-profit, and faith-based organizations. In the first part of the course, students gained a footing on the history and current functioning of NGOs and FBOs. Thereafter, they not only engaged critically with values and assumptions embedded in the business of development and NGO related work, they also learned practical skills important for the vocation, from money matters to navigating the rough waters of cross-cultural interactions.

The last part of the course engaged future contexts, opportunities, and challenges for NGO and FBO service and leadership in the 21st century. To help with these questions, Dr. Parsons organized a panel for the class, with the support of the CGCM and invited the STH community to attend. Panelists were chosen for their connections with STH, for their own spiritual and ethical commitment to service work, and to show how theological education would be helpful for a range of service vocations. The panelists included STH alum Rob Gordon, Executive Director of United Way of Kennebec Valley; John Lindamood, Director of Resident Services in the Cambridge Housing Authority, who holds an M.Div. from Harvard and has made presentations at STH in the past; and Paula Kline, Executive Director of the Montreal City Mission, who oversees an organization that is a contextual partner of STH.



The panel, “Enacting Mission Through Non-Profit and Faith-Based Service Work in Unpredictable Times,” took place on April 11, 2014. Dr. Parsons introduced the class and each guest spoke of the paths that brought them to non-profit work, addressed how they integrate spiritual formation and commitment into their vocation, and in the question and answer sessions that followed, shared practical ideas about how to get into non-profit work, and what kind of skills are important.

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Theological and pastoral education as laying the foundation for work in social justice and instilling compassionate values, working in partnership, and fundraising tips were just some of the key themes that emerged from the panel and discussion. The STH will look forward to future teaching and discussion on the intersection of mission and development.

Hands on Learning: Visiting NGOs & FBOs in Thailand

In January this year Dr. Todd Johnson led a residency study on religion and development in Chiang Mai, Thailand. Dr. Johnson was assisted by CGCM student associate Eva Pascal. The residency study is part of the World Christianity Doctor of Ministry program through the Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary.

The team of teachers and D.Min. students spent an intense and rewarding two weeks visiting over 20 non-governmental and faith-



based organizations in various parts of northern Thailand. These NGOs and FBOs were selected for the range of scale, religious affiliations, and the variety of social, political and environmental issues they addressed. They also included large-scale international organizations like ADRA, and local projects like Hope Home, a small house for disabled children. Many of the organizations focused on the challenges facing minority people (called Hill-Tribes) in the areas of education, sexual exploitation, health care, and land rights. Students were able to see first-hand not only some of the central challenges in the region, but how organizations have stepped up to address them, and how faith-based organizations work to integrate mission into their work. The residency was such an overall success that another residency in Thailand on religion and development is in the works for the next residency cohort.

CGCM Sponsors STH Community Lunch, Raises Awareness of Malaria Campaign

This April the Center for Global Christianity and Mission was proud to sponsor a luncheon for the STH community, while at the same time raising malaria prevention awareness with the help of one important faith-based organization associated with the United Methodist Church. During the luncheon, the CGCM invited Bonnie Marden, the Field Coordinator for the New England Conference Imagine No Malaria Campaign. Bonnie gave a brief presentation about the malaria campaign and how students could aid in the global efforts to combat malaria.

Dr. Liz Parsons on a Zambian Response to Development

On March 3, 2014 Dr. Elizabeth Parsons, gave to presentation on the Zambian response to Western intervention and the privatization of mines entitled "Witchcraft in the Workplace: Lessons from Zambia on Living Lightly in a Heavily Developed World." The talk was for the Walter Rodney African Studies Seminar at Boston University. The talk was based on a several years of qualitative research on site.

Costas Consultation on Christians in the Middle East Inspires Ecumenical Solidarity

The 2014 Costas Consultation on March 28 focused on Christians in the Middle East, and attracted many students, faculty, and interested lay people from diverse traditions associated with the Boston Theological Institute (BTI) of ten theological institutions in the greater Boston area. The consultation included a panel of student papers, the viewing and discussion of a film about Christians in Iraq, "Displaced in their Homeland," and two key speakers. Dr. Elizabeth Proromou, Harvard University researcher, and former Vice-Chair of the US Commission on International Religious Freedom, gave a lecture identifying and challenging five key myths about Christians in the Middle East (the myths of pluralism in the Ottoman Empire, the Middle East as the "Muslim World," Christians as foreign invaders, Ecumenical Solidarity, and Israel as a protector state for Christians) that when taken together, perpetuate the oppression and persecution of Christian communities in the region.



The keynote address was given by Bishop Elias Toumeh, Antiochian Orthodox Bishop of Pyrgou. Bishop Toumeh gave a heartfelt address on the struggle of Christians in Syria, and the importance of sacrificial leadership; the Bishop also looked at the positive opportunities that Christians have to minister in a time of conflict, such as serving as hostage negotiators.

Many CGCM associates participated in the event; student and CGCM Associate Director Daryl Ireland was a key coordinator of the Consultation. Another student, Gina Zurlo, presented one of the student papers centered on a demographic perspective of Christianity in the Middle East. The Consultation was an important opportunity, not only to educate the community about ancient Christians in the region and their plight for survival and religious freedom, but also to hear from people living in areas of conflict, and the forging of ecumenical support across nations and traditions.

BU's Strong ASM Showing (Continued from page 1)

Over a series of talks Moreau unpacked that question, and mapped the various ways Evangelicals are experimenting with contextualization in missions. Respondents helped expand the discussion, and participants were invited to join in the conversation both during sessions and over meals. BU associates were able to enrich the conversation over the course of the two day conference, and hope to continue active participation in the ASM in future regional and annual meetings.

CGCM News

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