

A Modest Proposal for the Promotion of a Global Christian Peace Corps



The cities of the future, rather than being made out of glass and steel as envisioned by earlier generations of urbanists, are largely constructed out of crude brick, straw, recycled plastic, cement blocks, and scrap wood... Instead of cities of light soaring toward heaven, much of the twenty-first-century urban world squats in squalor. (Mike Davis, Planet of Slums)

Richard Slimbach
Azusa Pacific University
rslimbach@apu.edu
Rev. 02/09

The following proposal consists of two parts. Part I provides a sketch of 200 years of evangelical social concern. This section is “backdrop” to Part II where we propose a “Global Christian Peace Corps” that joins believers in the global South with believers in the global North in efforts to promote God’s *shalom* among the world’s slum dwellers. Embedded in this broader movement to rebuild slum communities from the inside out is the Master of Arts in Transformational Urban Leadership (MATUL) degree program.

I. RECOVERING AN EVANGELICAL HERITAGE

Christians have long been on the forefront of humanitarian, human rights, and holistic development causes worldwide, exhibiting a profound concern for the poor and the dispossessed. Jesus left the early Christian community his own example of one who “went about teaching and preaching” and also “doing good and healing.” In continuity with the Jesus tradition, first-century disciples practiced solidarity with the poor both through communal living and the giving of alms. “Those who believed shared all things in common; they would sell their property and goods, dividing everything on the basis of each one’s needs” (Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-35). Paul coordinated special collections for the poor in the church of Jerusalem, reminding the early disciples of their obligations toward the less fortunate (see Acts 24:17; 2 Corinthians 8-9).

But some of the most remarkable examples of Christian social engagement appear in 18th century Europe and the United States. According to Wesley Bready in *England Before and After Wesley*,

Great Britain at this time was characterized by “the wanton torture of animals for sport, the bestial drunkenness of the populace, the inhumane trafficking in African negroes, the kidnapping of fellow countrymen for exportation and sale as slaves, the mortality of parish children, the universal gambling obsession, the savagery of the prison system and penal code, the welter of immorality, the prostitution of the theatre, the growing prevalence of lawlessness, superstition and lewdness; the political bribery and corruption, and the shallow pretensions of Deism.”

With the Evangelical Revival spearheaded by John Wesley these conditions began to change. A new social conscience fueled numerous movements for justice, transfiguring the moral character of the general populace. Wesley and the Methodist Church led in the establishment of the trade union movement. William Wilberforce piloted the British anti-slavery movement. Charles Spurgeon and William and Catherine Booth (founders of the Salvation Army) worked tirelessly on behalf of London’s working poor, proclaiming the gospel while establishing shelters for street children and campaigning for reforms in jails and factory labor practices. It was Robert Raikes who created Sunday schools at this time, not for middle-class folk, but to teach child factory workers how to read and write on the only day they had off. Social involvement was seen as the twin sister of evangelism.

On this side of the Atlantic, evangelicals¹ like Charles Finney, Lewis Tappan and Lyman Beecher dedicated themselves to “reforms” as well as “revivals.” Finney was convinced that “the gospel releases might impulses toward social reform.” In fact, in his *Lectures on Revival*, Finney writes, “the great business of the church is to reform the world.” It’s hardly surprising, then, that Finney’s converts spearheaded a host of social causes, including temperance, the elimination of juvenile delinquency, the abolition of slavery, and the rights of women. In fact, Oberlin College, where Finney was president, was the first co-ed college in the world, and the first woman ever ordained was an Oberlin graduate. Dwight Weld, a Finney convert, helped organize the illegal Underground Railroad to points north. One of those points, Wheaton College, became under its president Jonathan Blanchard a way station for escaped slaves.

The 19th century saw the enormous expansion of Christian missions and, again, social involvement served to demonstrate the economic, political and social implications of God’s reign. During the first half of the 19th century, Basel missionaries revolutionized the economy in Ghana by introducing coffee and cocoa cultivation. Others in northern Thailand worked to eliminate smallpox, malaria and leprosy. Long before the reform campaigns of Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu, David Livingstone and Robert Moffat worked to protect South African natives from exploitation by Boer colonialists. Christian workers fought fiercely to combat opium trading and foot binding in China, and widow-burning and temple prostitution in India—all the while opposing the exploitative practices of the East India Company. Throughout the

¹ The term “evangelical” derives from the Greek word for Gospel or “good news”: *εὐαγγέλιον* *evangelion*, from *eu-* “good” and *angelion* “message.” That distinctly “evangelical” message has historically centered upon four characteristics: the revelation of universal and eternal truth in the Old and New Testaments, God’s self-revelation to humanity in the person of Jesus and supremely in his self-donation on the cross, the reorientation of one’s entire being towards Christ and the kingdom through repentance and faith, and the hope of a future consummation—a “last day”—wherein all of creation will be made new. This vision of the “now but not yet” kingdom has long provided evangelicals a basis for redemptive action in the world. Contemporary activism seeks to transform persons, reform unjust social conditions, and heal the earth community.

“developing” world, Christians founded orphanages, supported female education, and opposed human sexual trafficking (the “white slave trade”).

THE GREAT RE-AWAKENING

Then, during the last decade of the 19th century and the first three decades of the 20th century, a major shift took place. Darwinian biology, together with the “higher criticism” and “social gospel” of theological liberals, began to cast increasing doubt on the literal accuracy of many biblical stories. The American Protestant movement broke apart, with the “fundamentalists” (named after *The Fundamentals*, published in 1917) opting to separate from their “modernist” brethren and to defend themselves and the gospel against attack. The fundamentalists hunkered down, gradually withdrew from politics and culture, founding Bible colleges and other parallel institutions that would protect the “fundamentals” of the faith, as well as the faithful. Their cultural defense was further buttressed by the widespread disillusionment and pessimism that followed the unimaginable cruelty and destruction of World War I. Human beings and human society appeared beyond reform; one could only hope to get as many people, as soon as possible, into heaven’s lifeboat.

Efforts to reverse what sociologist David Moberg called the “Great Reversal” began in the mid-1940s with the publication of Carl F.H. Henry’s *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism*. Henry, a founding faculty member at Fuller Seminary in Pasadena, California, challenged other Christian leaders to preach and act in ways that condemned “such social evils as aggressive warfare, racial hatred and intolerance, the liquor traffic, exploitation of labor or management, or the like.”

The social ferment of the 1960s only intensified the long-overdue theological re-assessment of evangelical faith. By 1973, older leaders like Carl Henry and Vernon Grounds joined younger evangelicals like Jim Wallis, Rich Mouw, John Perkins, Sharon Gallagher, and Ron Sider for a long weekend in Chicago to consider how to strengthen evangelical social engagement. The consultation resulted in the Chicago Declaration of Evangelical Social Concerns. The Declaration addressed issues like race relations, peacemaking, gender equity and environmental care that were largely “off the radar” of an aging generation of evangelical leaders who found themselves out-of-step with the cultural shifts that followed two decades of social agitation.

Over the last four decades, other Anglo-American leaders have thrown down the gauntlet for a socially conscious faith—one that would speak both to the spiritual needs of a fallen humanity *and* to the complex social and ecological issues of the day. Philosopher-theologian Francis Schaeffer and Os Guinness, both of L’Abri Fellowship in Switzerland, challenged the evangelical movement to a faith freed of nationalism, militarism, materialism, and environmental irresponsibility. Jim Wallis, editor-in-chief of *Sojourners* magazine, was joined by Ron Sider (founder of Evangelicals for Social Action) and Latin American missiologists Rene Padilla and Orlando Costas in calling for Christians to meet the physical, social and spiritual needs of poor communities. In the United Kingdom, Anglican pastor and author John Stott has continued to devote three months every year to pastoral travel throughout the “two-thirds” world, while also promoting an integral vision of Christian mission. His 1975 classic *Christian Mission in the Modern World* (1975), together with the Lausanne Covenant (1974), the Lausanne report

Evangelism and Social Responsibility (1982) and the Manila Manifesto (1989), helped lay the theological and missiological foundations for numerous humanitarian agencies, among them World Vision, Oxfam, Tearfund, and Mercy Corps.

A RESURGENT INTERNATIONALISM

Beginning in the mid-1990s, a new faith-based human rights movement burst unexpectedly on the international stage. Though hot-button issues like abortion and gay marriage continued to energize evangelical political involvement, their foreign policy agenda began to branch out. Conservative evangelicals teamed up with liberal Jews and Tibetan Buddhists to pass the *International Religious Freedom Act of 1998*. They joined with Gloria Steinem and all the major feminist organizations to pass the *Victims of Trafficking and Protection Act of 2000*, and then with the Congressional Black Caucus to pass the *Sudan Peace Act of 2002*. In 2003 they worked with Ted Kennedy and civil liberties groups such as the NAACP, La Raza, and Human Rights Watch to pass legislation targeting prison rape. The *North Korean Human Rights Act* followed in 2004. That same year, in an effort to repair the negative perception of evangelicals in Islamic regions following 9/11, two delegations were sent to the “Congress of Rabbis and Imams for Peace” in Ifrane, Morocco.

By constructing meaningful coalitions with non-evangelicals, the evangelical community was once again offering political responses to national and international problems beyond a narrow set of political issues. To further encourage a moral and ethical sociopolitical engagement, the National Association of Evangelicals released a statement in March 2005 entitled *For the Health of the Nations: a Call to Civic Responsibility* that was adopted by over 100 evangelical leaders.² In 2006, yet another group of more than 85 leaders (including over 30 college presidents) signed a controversial statement on climate change.³ This statement dramatically reversed the “global warning as hoax” position that had characterized evangelical attitudes toward the environment. That same year, Evangelicals for Human Rights was born as an organization, led by a four-person committee that included David P. Gushee, Ron Sider, Glen Stassen, and Rich Cizik. They later produced “An Evangelical Declaration Against Torture” which helped change the terms of the debate on state-sponsored torture. It’s noteworthy that President Barack Obama, on only his second full day in office, took swift action in signing an Executive Order banning torture and cruelty.

In light of the evangelical social ferment outlined above, it’s not surprising that Rev. Rick Warren, the megachurch pastor from Orange County and author of *The Purpose-Driven Life* (the best selling paperback in U.S. history) was invited to deliver the invocation at the inauguration of President Obama. For many young evangelicals, “new evangelical” leaders like Warren, Jim Wallis, and U2 rock star Bono exemplify a global consciousness and commitment shorn of old divisions and dichotomies—between sacred and secular, conservative and progressive, socialist and capitalist, domestic and international, social and ecological. They represent a new wave of Christians whose God is the God of justice *and* justification. One who abounds in love for all, but is especially concerned to “uphold the cause of the oppressed, to give food to the hungry, to set prisoners free, and to give sight to the blind (Ps. 146:7-9).

² Available at: http://www.nae.net/images/civic_responsibility2.pdf

³ Available at: <http://www.christiansandclimate.org/>

These developments have not escaped the public media. In May 2003, *New York Times* columnist Nicholas Kristof found himself defending the “newest internationalists” as anything but dangerous Neanderthals. “The old religious right led by Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson, trying to battle Satan with school prayers and right-to-life amendments, is on the ropes. It is being succeeded by evangelicals who are using their growing clout to skewer China and North Korea, to support Israel, to fight sexual trafficking in Eastern Europe and slavery in Sudan, and, increasingly, to battle AIDS in Africa.”

Three years later, in a March 2006 article titled, “Keeping the Faith, Globally,” *Los Angeles Times* columnist Gregory Rodriguez commended evangelicals for their work saving lives in the forgotten corners of the world, and for their recent embrace of various global human rights causes. By this time, and thanks to evangelical pressure, efforts to forgive third-world debts, suppress sex trafficking, and curb climate change were much higher priorities in U.S. policy. Concern over social justice, poverty, and the environment was reaching across ideological lines. Frances FitzGerald went on to update this expanded “pro-life agenda” in his June 2008 piece for the *New Yorker* titled “The New Evangelicals.”⁴

Meanwhile, the center of gravity for global Christianity has shifted to the so-called “developing” world, a momentous trend captured by books like *The Next Christendom* (Philip Jenkins) and *The Changing Face of Christianity* (Joel Carpenter). In 1900 the vast majority of the world's Christians lived in North America and greater Europe; today at least 60 percent of all Christians live in Asia, Africa and Latin America, and the figure is rising. And in the slums of Latin America and much of sub-Saharan Africa, Pentecostalism has emerged as a movement of persistent hope and social concern. “Indeed,” writes Mike Davis in *Planet of Slums*, “the historical specificity of Pentecostalism is that it is the first major world religion to have grown up almost entirely in the soil of the modern urban slum.”

II. A GLOBAL CHRISTIAN PEACE CORPS

Southern believers continue to infuse the faith with fresh vitality and local forms. Their dynamism suggests that the Church, at this moment in history, may be better prepared than ever before to forge strategic global partnerships in service to the world's dispossessed. Already evangelicals have built a remarkable grassroots network of alternative colleges, national associations, and parachurch organizations. And they are well on their way to fashioning a public philosophy informed by successful morality-based foreign policy initiatives. At the same time, churches throughout Africa, Latin America, and Asia continue to grow in their capacity to assume the lead in creative initiatives designed to address the spiritual, social and environmental concerns of “the least of these.” Not to be left behind, many post-modern believers in the West are stepping forward to join their brethren in non-Western nations in doing justice and mercy in the “hard places” of the world. Might the confluence of these developments signal a new “moment” for global eco-social responsibility?

Senator John F. Kennedy seized a prior moment when he first announced the idea of a Peace Corps while campaigning for the presidency in 1960. Addressing a crowd of 10,000 students and

⁴ Available at http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2008/06/30/080630fa_fact_fitgerald

faculty at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, Kennedy asked them if they were ready to dedicate a portion of their lives to service among the poor in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. His proposal quickly spread to colleges and universities throughout the nation, capturing the imagination of thousands of young people. Within a few short weeks, the Kennedy campaign received 30,000 letters in enthusiastic support of the idea.

In his inaugural address of January 20, 1961, President Kennedy challenged a new generation of Americans to join “a grand and global alliance” to fight tyranny, poverty, disease, and war. “To those peoples in the huts and villages of half the globe struggling to break the bonds of mass misery” he said, “we pledge our best efforts to help them help themselves.” Kennedy immediately appointed his brother-in-law, R. Sargent Shriver, to assemble a task force that worked around the clock to obtain endorsements from world leaders. The Peace Corps, argued Shriver, would serve as one of the “missing links” in their development plans.

Two months later Kennedy signed an executive order establishing the Peace Corps, and by July of 1961 service assignments were in place for Ghana, Tanzania, Colombia, the Philippines, Chile, and St. Lucia. Over 5,000 young adults applied to be part of the inaugural cohort. By the end of 1963, over 7,000 volunteers were serving in 44 countries from Afghanistan to Uruguay, half of them working in education, one-fourth in community development, and the remainder in agriculture, health care and public works. Three years later, in 1966, the number of volunteers had swelled to 15,000, the largest number in Peace Corps’ history.

It took the Peace Corps 25 years to devise a means whereby the service capacity of volunteers might be significantly strengthened. But in 1987 it began to establish training partnerships with U.S. academic institutions. Their Master’s International (MI) program, now involving over 40 academic institutions, allows volunteers to complement their overseas service with master’s-level training in fields ranging from public health to business development, agriculture to urban planning. Prospective MI students simultaneously apply to the Peace Corps and the participating graduate school(s) of their choice, and typically complete several semesters of initial coursework on campus before proceeding to their two year Peace Corps assignment relevant to their field of study. Upon completion of service, students return to campus for one or two final semesters. They graduate, not only with impressive academic credentials, but also with two years of international service experience and foreign language training.

Thousands of “new evangelicals” graduate every year from religious and secular colleges and universities. Many of these have participated in off-campus service and study programs, either abroad or in domestic settings and now find themselves considering an international career. While some choose to straightway enroll in advanced studies, others realize that in order to maximize the benefits of grad school, they need the kind of extended field experience that produces a high level of intercultural competence, second language proficiency, and first-hand knowledge of development issues. A growing number are opting to come under the tutelage of Third World organizations involved in comprehensive (and oftentimes faith-based) community-building projects.

The Master of Arts in Transformational Urban Leadership (MATUL) program aims to provide experiential and conceptual foundations for a generation of budding Christian internationalists intent on launching vocations dedicated to advancing God’s *shalom* throughout

the world. These vocations may be in the fields of international development, international relations, community development and planning, environmental policy, church leadership, non-profit management, public administration, global health, or public diplomacy, just to name a few. It is here, as experts in a broad array of fields focused upon human flourishing, that many in generation next would be challenged to bring their mature minds and consecrated hearts into vital partnership with the burgeoning church of the South. Indeed, as Walter Russell Mead noted in his essay “God’s Country?” (*Foreign Affairs*, Sept/Oct 2006), “Something now sadly lacking in the world of U.S. foreign policy [is] a trusted group of experts, well versed in the nuances and dilemmas of the international situation, who are able to persuade large numbers of Americans to support the complex and counterintuitive policies that are sometimes necessary in this wicked and frustrating—or, dare one say it, fallen—world.”

Like the Peace Corps’ Master’s International program, the MATUL is designed to combine two years of service within resource-poor communities with concurrent academic training. But unlike the Peace Corps model, all of the training, both practical and academic, is conducted in one’s field of service. Students from the U.S., Canada, Europe, Australia, and New Zealand join hands with their sisters and brothers in India, Sri Lanka, Philippines, Kenya, and Peru to engage topics as diverse as human rights, public and environmental health, community education, and small business development. Intensive, classroom-based training alternates with first-hand practical training within indigenous community organizations. By the close of the two-year service and study sequence, students will have earned a Master of Arts in Transformational Urban Leadership (MATUL).

Another distinctive of the MATUL program is in the setting of service. Whereas the Peace Corps has focused largely on “peoples in the huts and villages” of the developing world, the focus of the MATUL is on city dwellers. Small-scale settlements in rural areas have historically contained the majority of the world’s poor. But by 2035 that distinction will pass to the planet’s cities, currently expanding by a million babies and migrants *each week*. This growth is the product of both the “pull” of perceived economic opportunities and services in the metropolis, and the “push” of political turmoil and rural unemployment. While most dramatically seen in super-cities like Shanghai and Cairo, Mumbai and Dhaka, Nairobi and Lima, the fastest growing cities on the planet are actually faintly visible second-tier cities like Kanpur (India), Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso), and El Alto (Bolivia). These are expanding with virtually no planning and infrastructural development, forcing migrants to settle on hazardous and usually illegal lands on the urban periphery. The resulting slums and shantytowns appear as the only available “solution” to the problem of warehousing a global social class of at least one billion urban-dwellers, largely disconnected from the formal world economy.

Conditions in these squatter settlements are almost unthinkable, with overcrowding, squalor, unemployment, health hazards, hopelessness, and violence the everyday reality. Those who would intervene soon realize that residents are hostage to factors—like population pressures, technology development, climate change, and an integrated market economy—that exist beyond anyone’s direct control.

But there is one reality that *can* and *must* be addressed: *the lack of enlightened leadership* at both community and regional levels. A new generation of urban poor leaders is needed to organize

local residents in initiatives that can instill hope, mend families, create jobs, foster educational opportunities, improve sanitation and health care, and promote sound planning policies.

Before



After



Slum communities transformed by an organized citizenry, facilitated by enlightened church leaders and government bodies, to network a range of services (housing, water, electricity, roads, sewage, etc.) as a manifestation of the “now but not yet” reign of God.

Beginning in 2002, a network of foreign and national workers in slum development began to envision specialized mid-level training, both at the bachelors and masters level. Through several planning consultations (2004 in Bangkok, 2006 in Chennai, 2007 in Manila) the MATUL was born as a 45-unit degree program that joins theoretical, conceptual (classroom-based) to applied, practical (community-based) training in areas that include entrepreneurial leadership, community transformation, land rights, health care, small business development, educational centre development, and service to marginalized populations (e.g. sex workers and street children). By 2015, we hope to offer the MATUL through partnered training institutions on five continents.

Many fine programs exist for students to earn a Master of Arts (M.A.) or doctoral degree (Ph.D.) in the development-related fields of urban planning, public health, political science, economics, intercultural studies, and public policy. There are also a variety of interdisciplinary programs offered in International Development Studies.⁵ While the MATUL seeks to lay strong theoretical foundations from a variety of relevant disciplines, and values the role of serious contemplation on complex urban problems, it is not content with learning that is restricted to an “ivory tower,” safely sequestered from the painful realities of slum life. Our underlying assumption is that one discovers “truth” not through physical distance and emotional objectivity, but by entering into a mutually accountable relationship with community residents with whom students and faculty are intimately bound. The primary bond of the knower to the known is one of empathy and love, not dispassionate logic.

This assumption is reflected in the program goals, as well as in several distinctive features of the program design:

⁵ See <http://www.gradschools.com/search-international/Worldwide/International-Development/200.html>

Program goals. Students will be able to:

1. Synthesize knowledge from various disciplines (e.g. theology, sociology, environmental studies, public health, urban education) to understand the complexity of the urban poor condition.
2. Use experiential and technical understandings and skills to formulate and address urban poor problems at local, regional, national, or international levels.
3. Lead others in applying these concepts and skills to developing or strengthening urban poor movements that address individual and systemic sources of community pain and disadvantage.

Distinctive program features

- *Field-based.* International (Western) students are expected to relocate to program sites, find housing with local families either in or adjacent to slum communities, and commence intensive language learning for 3-6 months prior to commencing formal coursework through the hosting institution. National students residing outside the program site either fully relocate to the program site or remain at their home or service site and travel to the program site for the instructional period several times each year.
- *Practice-oriented.* Residence in or adjacent to actual slum communities enables students to combine living and learning (study, research, writing, and active problem-solving) in an integrated approach to leadership development. Following language study, international students begin practical training (internships) in various areas of community improvement through local community organizations.
- *Blended delivery.* While many program resources are accessible on-line, extensive topical discussion, problem solving, mentoring, and supervision take place face-to-face—with faculty, other students, and practitioners in the larger community. Both delivery methods seek to enhance the exchange of concepts, ideas, and experiences in the analysis of urban poor issues.
- *Field support.* Living and learning in distressed environments is unlike any other kind of educational activity in the intensity of emotional stress. For this reason, students regularly participate in daylong or overnight retreats together under the direction of an assigned field supervisor. During this “retreat” time, students rest, worship together, engage in reflective journaling and conversation, and do course-related reading.

What type of student might be attracted to a program of this kind? And, following graduation, what particular roles might they assume vocationally? Here is a sampling:

- *Religious movement leaders* — to serve as embryonic urban religious movement leaders.

- *Business entrepreneurs* — to launch new business organizations and structures linked to wider movements among the urban poor.
- *Urban poor missionaries* — to live in the poorest cities of the world, serving within or creating new redemptive structures among the urban poor.
- *Local NGO workers* — to progress into leadership roles within advocacy-, business-, and environmental-oriented grassroots organizations among the urban poor.
- *International NGO workers* — to provide leadership for community-based projects serving the urban poor within foundations and international relief- and development-oriented organizations (e.g. World Vision, Oxfam, Tear Fund).
- *Professionals* — to use their professional role as government administrators, business leaders, pastors, teachers, journalists, urban planners, etc. to promote the social, political, economic, and spiritual freedom of slum dwellers.
- “*Undeclared*” — to further develop a particular “call” to the urban poor through the MATUL training processes in order to act in any of the above roles.

Conclusion

United Nations researchers estimate that sometime around 2050 the human race will attain its maximum population, level off, and then decline. This final build-out of humanity will coalesce with irreversible climate change, totally altering the conditions of human life, as we know it today. This will take place in many of our lifetimes.

As already mentioned, virtually all of this final build-out will take place in the cities of the South. As the global countryside slowly begins to shrink, the majority of the 2 or 3 billion new inhabitants of planet earth will call a slum “home.” The actual living conditions of these settlements, and the local names that designate them, are virtually interchangeable: *bustees* in Kolkata, *chawl* and *zopadpatti* in Bombay, *katchi abadi* in Karachi, *kampong* in Jakarta, *iskwater* in Manila, *shammasa* in Khartoum, *umjondolo* in Durban, *bidonvilles* in Abijan, *baladi* in Egypt, *gecekoundou* in Ankara, *conventillos* in Quito, *favelas* in Brazil, *villa miseria* in Buenos Aires, and *colonias populares* in Mexico City.

The disturbing new reality is that squattable land has run out and the informal economy that once allowed migrants to improvise their own jobs has now reached the saturation point. The urban landscape and labor market is increasingly unable of absorb any more people. What will the future hold? Will a new generation of slum dwellers continue to suffer in silence? Or will they grow up to contest their abandonment and exclusion? A future transformation is far from guaranteed, but one thing *is* certain: it will not take place without the kind of understanding, organization, advocacy, and action that lays the basis for personal and institutional change, inspired by a vision for things as they *ought* to be.

You are invited to be part of the transformation.