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We Get To Carry Each Other: Using the Musical Activism of U2 As Framework For An Engaged Spirituality and Community Engagement Course

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Erratum

A new version adhering to APA guidelines replaced the original version on 12/01/2015.

We Get To Carry Each Other: Using the Musical Activism of U2 As Framework
For An Engaged Spirituality and Community Engagement Course
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This article describes a January term community engagement service-learning course that used the musical and spiritually-based activism of the rock group U2 as an example of engaged spirituality using activism and advocacy. In addition to learning about the history, music, and activism of the band, students were taught a specific set of skills for activism, advocacy, and community organizing that included creating goal statements, developing and implementing action plans, and coordinating logistics for advocacy-based events on campus. Students were assigned to apply these skills as the service-learning component of the course. These activities were conceptualized as indirect service that reflected activism and advocacy as a form of engaged spirituality. The students were exposed to theological concepts and tenets of Catholic Social Thought as an attempt to expand their understanding of faith-based traditions to include living one's faith in service with and to the poor and vulnerable. This article concludes by describing its impact and how learning objectives were met.

More and more institutions of higher education are incorporating community engagement and civic engagement as part of the educational experience (Welch & Saltmarsh, 2013). This type of engaged pedagogy consists of a broad range of methods that include community service as the most prominent, political participation the next most common form, and activism or advocacy as the least common (Lawry, Laurison, & VanAntwerpen, 2006). Bowen (2014) noted that students typically engage in direct service off campus through their service-learning course, which affords learners the opportunity to see the immediate impact of their efforts. However, he also suggests the traditional paradigm of direct service reflects acts of charity that, while admirable, may not promote social or political change. Taking this further, Heldke and O'Conner (2006) argued that the predominant charity model of service-learning is "politically and morally suspect" (p. 129) as it does not afford an exploration of deeper systemic issues related to various social issues or injustices. It is incumbent upon institutions of higher education, especially Catholic institutions, to explore alternative ways to incorporate engaged pedagogy.

This article describes a January term community engagement service-learning course that used the musical and spiritually-based activism of the rock group, U2, as an alternative approach and example of engaged spirituality using activism and advocacy. The students were exposed to theological concepts and tenets of Catholic Social Thought (CST) as an attempt to expand their understanding of faith-based traditions to include living one's faith to serve the poor and vulnerable. In addition to learning about the history, music, and activism of the band, students were taught a specific set of skills for activism, advocacy, and community organizing that included creating goal statements, developing and implementing action plans, and coordinating logistics for advocacy-based events on campus. These activities were conceptualized as in-direct service that reflected activism and advocacy as a form of engaged spirituality. Another unique aspect of the course was the community partner was a virtual partner at-a-distance in Washington, DC. This article concludes by describing its impact and how learning objectives were met. The author obtained permission from his students and the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of his institution to collect and report aggregate student mean scores on the pre/post test and to share anonymous reflection passages in this article.

Revisiting Activism and Advocacy As Engaged Pedagogy

Over a decade ago, Koth (2003) invited both students and educators to re-examine their assumptions, definitions, and formats of service. He also encouraged them to reflect on and expand the traditional paradigm of charity-based direct service to include activism, social entrepreneurship, and other in-direct approaches. About this same time, a group of students were convened at the Wingspread House at the Johnson Foundation in Racine, Wisconsin to discuss current and future approaches of civic engagement in 2002. They recognized the important and potential ways service-learning connects service and politics. However, these student leaders also recognized the curricular limitations of many service-learning courses as they focus on disciplinary content to provide direct service rather than promote skills necessary for community-based work. This missing skill set included advocacy, organizing, conflict resolution, as well as other practical tactics. Finally, they identified and characterized three distinct forms of political engagement: conventional politics, community service, and coined a new term of service-politics that "serves as a bridge between community service and conventional politics" (Long, 2002, p. vi).

Activism can be thought of as a nonviolent act to influence those in power to pursue a public good (Shultz, 2003). The *Blackwell Dictionary of Political Science* (Bealey, 1999) defined an activist as an individual who is more active in politics than

the average person and is general defined by the amount of time and effort that is committed to a particular cause or issue. Heldke and O'Conner (2006) intentionally coined and used the term "moral activism." They maintained that this hybrid term requires an individual to reflect on their own beliefs and values, encouraging an integration of those beliefs and values into a responsibility to engage with the world to promote social justice. The Latin root of advocacy is *vocare* or voice. Advocacy, then, is the act of giving voice or speaking on behalf of an individual or group whose interests or concerns are not heard (Berke, Boyd-Soisson, Voorhees, and Reininga, 2010; Harris & White, 2013). The course partner, ONE.ORG invites supporters to "give your voice, not your money." Engaged spirituality was defined as the manifestation of faith-based tenets in action to promote justice and peace (Parachin, 1999; Rothberg, 2006).

Ambivalence inherent with assumptions about activism and advocacy seem to complicate attempts to incorporate them into service-learning contexts. Heffernan (2002) argued that student understanding and assumptions are largely based on media portrayal of activism as protest or the animosity associated with traditional partisan politics. One college professor publicly lamented the challenge and failure she experienced as she attempted to teach students how to be activists (Helman, 2008). Students had difficulty grasping the conceptual difference between activism and volunteering. Heldke and O'Conner (2006) proposed the term "political activism" was actually a pejorative as it connoted a narrow perception of work associated with the state or government which is negatively viewed by the general public. Likewise, there are legitimate issues and challenges regarding potential coercion on the part of instructors imposing their personal politics on students in the guise of teaching and learning.

The Spirituality of Service Learning and Engaged Spirituality

In addition to the potential political impact service-learning can have, Welch and Koth (2013) argued that service-learning can play a role in the spiritual formation of college students. They presented a meta-model that depicts various phases and ways students can have a spiritual experience through service-learning by transcending simply earning a grade to being committed to a cause or purpose by way of their service experience. In many ways, this process lends itself to what can be thought of as engaged spirituality. This concept is generally attributed to Buddhist tradition (Rothberg, 2006) which is characterized as finding and utilizing resources within a faith tradition to nurture an individual's own sense of being while participating in activities that promote peace, justice, compassion, and a sense of wholeness (Parachin, 1999; Queen, 2000). However, engaged spirituality can easily be generalized to other faith traditions. Any form of engaged pedagogy, whether it be in a traditional charity-based service-learning or other approaches such as advocacy, linked to and applying faith-based principles such as CST could be considered as a form of engaged spirituality as well as civic or community engagement (Steinfels, 2004).

The Music and Spiritual Activism of U2

U2 has been overt in their activism as a way of acting on their faith. Their official website includes a page entitled, "Hearts + Minds" devoted to an array of organizations they either started or support. Their earliest activism began in the late 1980s and early 1990s with Greenpeace and Amnesty International, including participating in an international tour called, "The Conspiracy of Hope Tour." The band burst on to the world stage by performing at the LIVE AID concert created to raise funds for famine relief in Africa. The humanitarian cause resonated personally with lead singer, Bono, inspiring him and his wife to serve in relief camps in Africa. As a result, Bono and the band have been instrumental in various activist campaigns including the collaboration with Bobby Shriver to create the RED Campaign, The Chernobyl Children's Project, DATA (Debt, AIDS, Trade, Africa), and Jubilee 2000 which was an international effort focused on Third World debt relief based on Leviticus 25:12. The band's main effort has been the creation of the ONE Campaign, which served as the cooperating partner agency for this course.

Course Description

A detailed description of the course is presented in this journal focused on engaged pedagogy to illustrate alternatives to traditional charity models of service-learning and to serve as a model for replication at other institutions. Likewise, the literature on service-learning calls for documentation of impact and outcomes of this pedagogy (Eyler & Giles, 1999). Therefore, this article concludes with a description of outcomes for the student and for the cooperating partner. The course utilized songs, lyrics, video clips of concert footage, readings and scripture to gain insight into the spiritual and political mission of U2 through activism, advocacy, and engaged spirituality as a form of in-direct service. Three theoretical and theological models served as a foundation for exploring specific social issues and activism addressed by the band's music.

Theoretical and Theological Foundations

The first foundation for the course was the theological construct of CST. Students were introduced to this rich history of Catholic doctrine and teaching for a just society based on the Hebrew tradition of Shalom. The class examined specific concepts of CST such as human dignity, option for the poor, solidarity, and war/peace (Byron, 1998; Krier Mich, 2011) that were directly tied to the issues raised in the music and activism of U2. Scholars generally agree that CST emerged from Pope Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum*, published in 1891, by moving the church into solidarity with the working class and poor (DeBerri & Hug, 2003; Shannon & O'Brien, 1992). Himes (2005) characterized CST as principles, concepts, and doctrine related to society and human life. In this way, CST is designed to address aspects of societal life that diminish human relationships with each other, the environment, and God. These principles acknowledge that many of these conditions are the result of politics, social structures, policies, and

institutions (Groody, 2012). As such, CST consists of several key tenets that are directly applicable to the course and activism of the band. U2 lyrics, coupled with specific social issues, addressed and utilized four specific CST themes as the foundation of the spiritual engagement projects. These tenets were derived from the United States Conference of Bishops statement on CST (2015).

The first was solidarity, in which ONE.ORG is a formal organization that is in solidarity with the poor and oppressed. The United States Conference of Bishops (USCB) characterized solidarity as the embodiment of being part of one human family, regardless of differences in race, nationalities, economic status, and ideologies. The pursuit of justice and peace is a key virtue of solidarity. A second theme is the call to family, community, and participation. The USCB proposed that people are social as well as sacred and that the social, economic, and political ways of organizing society impacts human dignity. The political activism of the course projects involved the students as a social group and encouraged them to engage their peers to influence political bills in the U.S. Congress. This is directly related to the third theme of rights and responsibilities in which every person has a duty and responsibility to serve, protect, and respect others. Finally, the course incorporated and promoted the option for the poor and vulnerable through advocacy in which students provided a voice for the voice-less. The activist challenges developed by ONE.ORG were used by the student teams to put the needs of the poor and vulnerable first.

The second theoretical foundation of the course was engaged pedagogy, which can be applied to service-learning. Colby, Ehrlic, Beaumont, and Stephens (2003) described basic components that can help an instructor conceptualize and conduct an engaged course. These include: 1) active learning, 2) learning as a social process, 3) knowledge shaped by contexts, 4) reflective practice, and 5) capacity to represent an idea in more than one modality. Another aspect of engaged pedagogy is nurturing students' civic skills as citizens in a just and democratic society. Battistoni (2002) summarized eight specific skills students need to be engaged citizens. Again, these can/may be applied to community engagement courses focused on social justice and change. These skills include: 1) political knowledge and critical thinking skills, 2) communication skills, 3) public problem solving, 4) civic judgment, 5) civic imagination and creativity, 6) collective action, 7) community and coalition building, and 8) organizational skills. Components from each of these theoretical frameworks were incorporated into the course.

A third foundation of the course was Brueggemann's (2001) spirituality of Psalms in which his three perspectives of the Psalms were adapted by Vagacs (2005) to frame the band's chronology and career. According to Brueggmann, some Psalms constitute a sense of "orientation" that convey a sense of order in the world as well as God's presence in the world that brings about hope, serenity, and confidence. A second perspective is that of "dis-orientation" that reflects a time and expression of

lament, anger, and darkness. A new or "re-orientation" represents a third perspective with images of hope, joy, and assurance of God's grace. Finally, Brueggemann explores spirituality and justice of theodicy in the Psalms. The course metaphorically viewed U2 songs as a type of psalm.

Course Objectives

The course objectives were designed so students would be able to demonstrate understanding and application of:

1) The history, social/religious context, and personal background of the band and individual members.
2) Theological conceptualization of orientation, dis-orientation, and re-orientation in the context of spiritual formation, coupled with U2's discography and concert tours with examples reflecting each phase.
3) The circumstance and factors surrounding specific social issues and how the music/activism of U2 are related.
4) Various social change organizations, initiatives, and activists.
5) Theological constructs, including CST, and the spiritual context of U2's activism.
6) Basic fundamentals of community organizing/activism using action plans.
7) Consciousness-raising of poverty and/or AIDS issues in Africa by establishing a campus chapter of the ONE organization.

It is important to note that the course objectives did not include any attempt to proselytize students in any way. Likewise, students were able to choose which of the four projects to participate in.

Course Outline

January term is a month-long study of one particular subject that can occur on campus in traditional classroom settings or through domestic and international travel. All students at this Liberal Arts, Catholic college are required to take January term courses during their four years. Likewise, all students are required to successfully complete a course officially designated as "community engagement" as one of twelve required learning goals within the undergraduate core curriculum. Courses applying for this designation submit a proposal to a faculty committee for review and approval. Course proposals must meet three criteria that include: a) applying academic methods and/or theories in a way that promotes collaboration and mutual benefit in a community setting, b) demonstrate critical reflection throughout the experience, and c) express an understanding of the interconnections between their experience and their responsibilities as members of social or professional communities. A total of 19 students, mostly freshmen and sophomores from a variety of faith traditions or no religious tradition at all, were enrolled in the class. Each class session was 2 ½ hours long, meeting four times a week for four weeks.

The course used two texts (Stockman, 2003; Vagacs, 2005), various articles, websites, and video clips to be viewed in and out of class. A total of 33 songs from all three phases of U2's career were examined and discussed. Discussions of each song were facilitated by either the instructor or by a student who had randomly drawn the title of the song on the first day of class. Each discussion included a review and interpretation of the lyrics, listening and/or viewing of the song using a recording or You Tube video clip, consideration of relevant scripture pertaining to the song, and current social and/or political contexts at the time the song was written. Some songs were used to inform the class on specific political topics or social issues. These include "Sunday Bloody Sunday" decrying the sectarian violence in Northern Ireland, "New Year's Day" honoring Lech Walesa and the Solidarity movement in Poland, "Pride (In the Name of Love)" that serves as a monument to Martin Luther King, Jr., "Bullet The Blue Sky" admonishing the US role in the civil wars of Central America in the 1980s and 1990s, "Miss Sarajevo" as a testament to the will of the people in Sarajevo during their ethnic civil war, and "Walk On" is dedicated to Burmese activist Aung Sang Suu Kyi.

Course Activities
Community Partner and Advocacy Service Project

The community engagement activity required students to form teams and conduct three campus-based advocacy events in partnership with ONE.ORG. The organization was co-founded by U2 lead singer, Bono. It is a campaigning and advocacy organization of more than 3.5 million people working to end poverty and preventable disease, particularly in Africa. The ONE.ORG website states it is a nonpartisan organization that raises public awareness and works with political leaders from around the world to ameliorate AIDS and other preventable diseases. The mission includes empowering local groups in Africa through investments in agriculture and nutrition. ONE.ORG also works closely with African activists and policymakers to fight poverty, while monitoring the use of aid designed for capacity building. The organization has recruited over 100 college campuses to serve as campus chapters of ONE.ORG. These chapters engage in various "challenge" activities developed and distributed by ONE.ORG. The site has several resources and templates that can be downloaded.

The instructor communicated with a staff member from ONE.ORG who oversees campus chapters across the country several weeks in advance of the class to identify possible class projects. The staff member met virtually with the class via SKYPE on the first day of class to introduce the organization's history and mission. The staff member indicated the "mantra" of the organization is, "We need your voice, not your money" and led a discussion on the meaning and role of advocacy followed by an overview of the four "challenge" activities the class teams would conduct. One team was in charge of establishing a campus chapter of ONE.ORG and recruiting members. The other challenge advocacy projects included: a) conducting a "mythbusting" awareness campaign to educate the campus on the federal budget allocation to foreign aid and

to petition congress to maintain foreign aid funding, b) consciousness raising of energy poverty in sub-Saharan Africa and signing electronic petitions to congress to fund energy initiatives, and c) using protest music to promote social change or "Agit8" which included electronic petitions to members of congress. Students chose which team and project to join.

Each team developed an action plan with measurable objectives in a goal statement and implemented their plan during the last week of class. The goal statement for the team devoted to establishing a campus chapter of ONE.ORG included official campus organization designation as well as a target number of recruits for the chapter. The goal statements of the other three teams included a specific number of signatures and/or electronic messages to be gathered and submitted to congress and/or ONE.ORG headquarters. Each team's action plan broke the project down into steps and listed who does what, when, where, with what and by what date. The components of the action plan reflected key skill sets of engaged pedagogy described above.

A draft action plan was submitted mid-term for feedback to receive half of the points allotted to the assignment. A criterion was articulated on the syllabus and used to assess the initial plan. Teams received remaining points upon successful implementation of the plan and if their goal statement was successfully achieved. Each individual student earned the points awarded to the team. Other skill sets included assessing and practicing effective interpersonal communication skills, time management, conflict management, and advertising events as well as learning campus policy and procedures to secure venues and equipment for the events. Time was given during class for teams to meet but each team recognized the need for ongoing communication and coordination outside of class time.

Other Assignments
Student presentation. Students randomly drew the title of a U2 song and were required to make a ten-minute presentation to the class. Each presentation included: their interpretation of the lyrics, historical background and/or social justice context of the song (if any), and a theological reference or interpretation. The presentation included leading a discussion that included tenets of CST and questions the student presenter generated.

Written paper. Students were also required to write a five-page paper that could examine the band as a whole, a specific member of the band, an in-depth critique of a song/album, concert tour, or an activist organization associated by the band. The syllabus included a detailed evaluation rubric and criteria for the paper.

Reflection. A one-page written reflection entry was assigned each week. The reflection responses incorporated the ABCs of reflection (Dubinsky, Welch, & Wurr, 2012; Welch, 2002). The reflection format required students to reflect on their affective aspects of the experience, their behaviors, and their cognitive development. For the first week, students were asked to reflect

on a particular band member's biography and role and/or the personality of the band itself. The reflection for the second week invited students to reflect on music as a form of prayer and/or activism. The third reflection assignment had the students reflect on whether our culture was in a phase of orientation, dis-orientation, or re-orientation as described by Bruggeman (2001) and to argue which U2 song seemed applicable to their assessment. The final reflection was on the engaged spiritual activism and teamwork experience. Excerpts from the summary reflection entry are presented at the conclusion of this article. Part of the final group reflection discussion took place with the ONE.ORG staff member via SKYPE. Students then submitted a final written reflection.

Final exam. Students were given a pre/post measure designed to assess their knowledge of key terms, concepts, and events related to the class content. The post-test was an exact replica of the pre-test and was used as the course's final exam. A simple two-tail t-test was conducted at the end of the course to determine if there was a statistically significant gain in the students' cognitive score.

Week One: Introduction and Foundations

A detailed description of the first week is presented here to serve as the foundation of the course activities and design, as well as for possible replication. The class began with an overview of the band and its members as well as key foundational concepts. This included characterizing three of the four band members as Christians, but not necessarily dubbing the band itself as a "Christian band" that played "Christian music" or "praise music" as proposed by Cooper (2004) in one of the readings. Readings and class discussion introduced the idea that music could be used not only as activism, but as an act of faith as demonstrated by U2. A 25-minute documentary video produced and commissioned by ONE.ORG presented a compelling visual and aural history of protest music used in the context of several social movements including civil rights, anti-war, environmentalism, women's rights, and gender equality. The class and campus were licensed by ONE.ORG to host a viewing of the documentary as part of one of the campus challenge activities.

The week included an introduction of key terms such as politics, activism, advocacy, psalms, inaugurated eschatology, prophets, religion, spirituality and engaged spirituality, theology, and community (*koinonia*) that would serve as an operational lexicon and conceptual foundations for the course. A pre-flection exercise on each of these terms incorporated a graffiti method of reflection. Each term was listed on a piece of poster paper that was posted on the walls around the room. Students moved from poster to poster scribbling their definition or understanding of each term to obtain a baseline of understanding and to activate prior knowledge as a basis for continued cognitive understanding. Students had a general understanding of psalms as a poem or song and therefore were able to make the metaphorical connection from a biblical context to the music of U2. They were, however, unaware of

the various format and type of psalms characterized by Brueggemann (2001). One in-class activity involved impromptu composition of a psalm for that present moment and feeling.

Aristotle's depiction of "politika" as affairs of the state was used to introduce the context and concept of politics for the course. In this way students learned that, "politikos" or "citizens" are responsible for making decisions about the affairs of the state and reframed students' preconceived and limited notion of partisan politics. The course discussion emphasized U2's perspective of "personal politics" as the way one lives out their life and that personal lifestyle choices are inherently political acts. This approach clearly embodied and reflected tenets of CST.

While the students were generally aware of what activism is, they were essentially unaware of various causes U2 has been a part of nor the organizations they were either affiliated with or instigated. The course provided an overview of these causes and groups that included: Amnesty International and the Conspiracy of Hope concert tour, Jubilee 2000 campaign for global debt relief, LIVE AID, Chernobyl Children's Project, Greenpeace, Edun, DATA, ONE Campaign, and Project Red. In this context, the concept of "inaugurated eschatology" as described by Garrett (2009) was introduced to embellish the spiritual dimension of activism. Garrett noted that eschatology means "talk of last things" or the kingdom to come and argued that many Christians focus only on "the next life, with little interest in this one" (p. 102). He goes on to propose that U2 embraces an "inaugurated eschatology which is [a call] to work toward the coming of God's reign by doing the things that Jesus began doing when Jesus inaugurated the kingdom of heaven: feeding the hungry, healing the sick, working for peace…" (p. 103). This concept also reflects basic tenets of CST.

The role of prophets was also explored. Flanders, Crapps, and Smith (1996) characterized the role of prophets in the Old Testament as taking their place along side the priests and king as one of three religious functionaries of Hebrew tradition as a critic to keep religion "honest." The class text by Garrett (2009) included a quote by Theologian, Eugene Peterson, discussing the role of prophets in Whiteley and Maynard's book (2003):

> [Prophets] confront us with the sovereign presence of God in our lives. If we won't face up, they grab us by the scruff of our necks and shake us into attention. Amos crafted poems, Jeremiah wept sermons, Isaiah alternately rebuked and comforted, Ezekiel did street theater. U2 writes songs and goes on tour, singing them. (Peterson, 2003, p. xii).

In this way, the class critically reflected on and debated the possible role of U2 (and Bono in particular) as contemporary prophets in the role advocates for those without a voice.

Spirituality was defined and presented to the class as "a way of life that affects and includes every moment of existence" (Tisdell, 1999, pp. 17-18). This was expanded by characterizing spirituality as consisting of three essential components: 1) a sense of self, 2) a connection with others, and 3) making meaning of those connections and relationships that transcends one's own needs (English, 2000; Hamilton & Jackson, 1998). This was compared and contrasted to religion, which was defined as a transcendent relationship with the divine (Nelson, 2010) characterized by three salient features that include: 1) belief in supernatural/transcendent power, 2) observance of rituals/practices, and 3) adherence to code of behavior from doctrine (Fontana, 2003). The differentiation between spirituality and religion was especially compelling (and equally interesting) to the students as they learned of the band's disdain for organized, institutionalized religion while embracing Christian spirituality and the "politics of Christ."

The concept of engaged spirituality was defined as finding and utilizing resources within a faith tradition to nurture an individual's own sense of being while participating in activities that promote peace, justice, compassion, and a sense of wholeness (Parachin, 1999). This was presented in conjunction with principles of CST enumerated and described above. Similarly, theology was framed using Vagac's (2005) interpretation and adaptation of Migliore's (1991) definition as "humanity's ongoing discussions about God" (Vagacs, 2005, p. xvii) as opposed to many college students' perception of theology as dogma or a set of tenets to believe. Garrett (2009) succinctly and simply defined theology as "god-talk." In this sense, students were actively engaged in theological discussion, given the nature and structure of the course.

Finally, the notion of community was explored, emphasizing the concept of *koinonia* as fellowship. Garrett (2009) argued in his text that U2 embodied *koinonia* as a conceptual tactic in three ways: 1) as a band, 2) with its audience, and 3) the global community. The notion and intentional use of concerts as fellowship, community and politics was explored by the class using an article by Morely and Somdahl-Sands (2011) and by examining the conscious and deliberate stage designs to infuse a sense of intimacy and community using a website (http://www.stufish.com/u2). Students learned that U2 invites and allows various organizations such as Amnesty International to set up information tables at their concerts. The class also observed the political messages overtly expressed during concerts. Examples ranged from inviting a group of women known as the Mothers of the Disappeared to come on stage in Buenos Ares as the band sang a song of the same name to admonish the Argentine government for its repression of dissent to performing their song, "Walk On" while projecting images of Burmese activist Aung Sang Suu Kyi who was under house arrest.

Each of the remaining three weeks was devoted to one of the phases of the band's musical career coupled with Brueggemann's (2001) characterization of the Psalms as orientation, dis-orientation, and re-orientation as organized and presented in Vagacs' (2005) book, *Religious Nuts – Political Fanatics,* which was one of the course texts. Time was also allocated during each class session to work on their projects as a team and to share with the class as a whole.

Week II - Phase I: Orientation

The second week of the class focused on the early career and music of the band which reflected what both Brueggemann (2001) and Vagacs (2005) characterized as their orientation phase in which the Psalms and the band's music reflected order and a sense of purpose or direction. During this period, U2 was fairly overt about their faith and personal politics in their early albums. Their 1981 album, *October* (1981*),* included faith-based songs such as "Rejoice" and "Gloria" and later albums such as *War* (1983) included both political songs such as "Sunday Bloody Sunday" decrying the death of protesters in Northern Ireland, acknowledging the activism of Lech Walesa and the Solidarity movement in "New Year's Day" and its own psalm entitled, "40" which was drawn from Psalm 40. The albums *Unforgettable Fire* (1984) and *Joshua Tree* (1987) continued this trend with landmark songs such as "Pride (In The Name of Love)" honoring Martin Luther King, Jr., "Bullet the Blue Sky" which is a condemnation of the U.S. involvement in the civil wars of El Salvador, and "I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For." This phase of the band's career came to a fairly abrupt end after scathing reviews and criticism of their *Rattle and Hum* tour and subsequent soundtrack album. During this period, the band was criticized as being "holier-than-thou" and pretentious. As a result, the band took a hiatus to re-invent itself.

Week III – Phase II: Dis-orientation

Brueggemann (2001) and Vagacs (2005) characterized the phase of dis-orientation as a time and expression of lament, anger, and darkness that permeates both the Psalms and much of U2's music during this phase of their career. The band returned from its hiatus incorporating a techno-pop sound and a new concert stage that generated a disorienting, overwhelming, visual overload for the audience depicting a musical and dystopian Babylon known as Zooropa. The music and concerts used irony as a social critique of contemporary idolatry in the form consumerism and narcissism. The band also brought the horror of war to light, both in Sarajevo and the Gulf War. Concerts included live satellite interviews with survivors in Sarajevo. You Tube video clips of these concert satellite feeds were viewed during a class session.

Week IV – Phase III: Re-orientation

The final phase of re-orientation can be seen as hopeful and imaginative of things to come or what might be (Brueggemann, 2001; Vagacs, 2005). In 2001, the band re-emerged from its self-imposed exile in their dystopian Babylonian Zooropa with their album *All That You Can't Leave Behind* (2001), followed by *How To Dismantle An Atomic Bomb* (2004), and *No Line On The Horizon* (2009). The class also watched video clips of U2's

emotional Half-time performance at the Super Bowl soon after the 9/11 attacks as well as Bono's erudite and poignant message at the President's Prayer Breakfast to focus on justice rather than charity. Each team launched its events during the last week of the course.

Outcomes

Advocacy Service Projects

Each team met its action plan goal. This would suggest that students met the instructional objectives of applying newly acquired engaged pedagogy and activism skill sets. A campus chapter of ONE was formally established by navigating a host of campus bureaucratic red tape and met their targeted goal of initial members. The chapter leaders then worked with other class teams to coordinate and advertise their campus project events. The chapter continued to be active on campus after the course ended and into the next academic year as this article is written.

The "mythbusting" team produced a video documenting team members interviewing students on campus if they knew what percentage of the federal budget was allocated to foreign aid. The video not only showed the vast array of estimates, but the student reactions when they were told the budget allocation was only 1%. The video captured students signing an electronic petition asking Congress to maintain its current level of funding. The video was posted on You Tube (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jd46Qfiuu6E) and sent to ONE.ORG. The team obtained just over 250 electronic signatures on an electronic petition sent to Congress.

The consciousness-raising of energy poverty team hosted an education and simulation event on campus. The team made a Powerpoint presentation highlighting the issues around energy poverty, including descriptions of how students in Africa often sit in lighted parking lots to be able to see when completing homework assignments. Participants were then invited to complete their homework "in the dark" to get a sense of what college students in Africa experience. The team then led a reflection conversation on the ways Americans take electricity for granted, including a description of rural hospitals in Africa where vaccines cannot be properly refrigerated due to inadequate electrical grids. The team also canvassed the campus getting electronic petition signatures urging Congress to fund the Electrify Africa program designed to promote sustainable energy in sub-Saharan Africa. Energy poverty has a negative impact in multiple ways, including lack of electricity to adequately and consistently refrigerate vaccines in local clinics. The team gathered approximately 275 signatures that were sent to each student's individual Congressional representative urging them to support the Electrify Africa Act of 2013.

Finally, the "Agit8" team was interviewed about the new campus chapter of ONE.ORG on the campus radio station and hosted a viewing of the video documentary on the history of protest music. Nearly 45 students attended the viewing,

followed by a reflection discussion conducted by the team. The team was able to obtain 150 electronic signatures sent to Congress over the course of the week in partnership with the other two initiatives and to recruit members to the newly organized campus chapter of ONE.

Perhaps more importantly, the students experienced the real challenges associated with advocacy and in working as a group. Time management, conflict management, logistical coordination, follow-through, shared ownership and responsibilities became a reality rather than abstract concepts. Periodic review of action plans quickly revealed who was carrying their weight and who was not. Learning to work together as a team was a significant hidden curriculum of the course.

Curiously, the projects inadvertently created an unexpected outcome in which several students expressed interest in continuing their activism and service through the community service center on campus. As this article is written, one student is exploring the creation of a musical service organization in which college student musicians would perform at local hospitals, retirement centers, and hospice centers. Two other students applied for summer immersion fellowship positions offered and hosted by the campus community engagement center. These outcomes demonstrate the potential transcendent power of service-learning experiences described by Welch and Koth (2013).

Pre/post Cognitive Measures

The final exam consisted of the same cognitive measure administered on the first day of class as a pre-test to gather baseline data on students' understanding of key concepts. A simple, one-tailed t-test was administered to determine if there was a statistically significant difference between the pre and post-test scores with 25 total points possible. The class' pre-test mean score of 1.26 was significantly lower than the post-test mean score of 20.0 with a p-value of 0.0239. This suggests that with 95% certainty, it can be assumed the cognitive growth of the 19 students did not occur by chance. These results suggest the instructional objectives were met as student responses demonstrated: a) an understanding of historical, social, and religious contexts of the band, b) Bruggemann's (2001) theological constructs of orientation, dis-orientation, and re-orientation as applied to both the Psalms and the band's career, and c) insight into specific historical and social events.

Content Analysis of Reflection Papers

Qualitative analysis and review of students' reflection papers presents an array of insight regarding their take-aways. Some students reflected on how the class impacted their faith or lack of it, especially in the context of engaged spirituality. Reflection passages revealed that principles of CST resonated with most students, regardless of their faith (or lack of one). The comments also depict what Welch (2010) characterized as the "shadow side of reflection" in which students often articulate

their discomfort or cognitive dissonance they often encountered during service-learning. One student reflected:

> This class changed me in ways that I never could even have imagined. I have never been more confused in my entire life after taking this class…but in a good way. Bono and the boys have taught me that going to church every Sunday for an hour does not necessarily make you a good person. It is what you do with the rest of those twenty-three hours that matter. Eating the Eucharist every Sunday at Mass is not any substitution for "eating crumbs from the table" [a reference to a U2 song and Matthew 15:27] with the homeless in your spare time. God is our backbone, religion is an idea, and spirituality is an instrument.

Other comments focused on spiritual engagement and activism of the class. Another student's comments suggest the instructional objectives regarding an understanding of historical and social issues were met.

> Listening to "Get On Your Boots" (U2 song) and discussing the underlying message, I felt a new surge of support to feminism and the fight for gender equality. Overall, this class was an eye-opening experience that I didn't see coming. I expected to listen to music, learn about the band, and come out of it knowing a few more U2 songs. Instead, I'm now aware of things like how much of our budget is spent on foreign aid, the war in Sarajevo, U2's ironic attack on consumerism and the "me" generation, and all the incredible work being done to fight disease, poverty, and injustice. This change in me is a little scary. While I feel like my options to make a difference are endless, I'm still unsure of how to get there. At this moment, though, I feel passionate and proud of the work we've done and I'm looking forward to doing more.

Another student was able to articulate her new understanding of the difference between charity and activism, a common theme and topic of the class, from the perspective of an affluent and privileged millennial. In particular, she addresses one of the challenges associated with young people's reticence toward activism described above.

> Personally, I think we're on the brink of something. ONE.ORG taught me that just your voice, instead of money, can make a difference. I think this idea of grassroots activism is new to our generation. Charity is one way we grew up, rather than thinking about Congress. Maybe it's because many

people, especially in my generation, do not think too highly of the government. But ONE.ORG is a non-partisan group that deals with personal politics, so I think that encourages young people to join, because they don't have to worry about being "politically correct." I used to be weary of my generation doing anything "off screen" but my fellow classmates have inspired me. I felt we have really bonded and came out of our shell over these four weeks. We have become "factivists" [a term used by Bono in a TED talk depicting the use of facts to make an argument] putting on actual events and getting petitions signed rather than just posting something on Facebook. U2 has definitely made social justice "cool." At times, I felt guilty of my privilege, thinking "what have I done to deserve these things?" but after listening to "Magnificent" and "Get On Your Boots" (U2 songs) I realized I should use my gifts of public speaking, organization skills, and personality to actually do something. I remember seeing [the ONE.ORG staff member] on SKYPE the first day of class and thinking, "I could be like her!"

Finally, another student reflected on his newly gained personal insight and shift in his past behavior of volunteerism to activism.

> I've done my fair share of volunteering and other beneficial events. But I could never help feeling that I was only treating symptoms of the problem, not solving the issue at its core. Now with activism, along with other forms of engagement, I can help others short-term while working to permanently end issues like poverty and hunger. This class really served as an eye-opening experience for me in that I can now see the difference I can make both as an individual and as part of an organization like ONE.ORG.

Conclusion

It appears students were able to readily identify and associate specific tenets of CST into their work as evidenced in their class presentations of U2 songs, reflection entries, and final paper. In this way, the course was able to incorporate CST as a form of engaged spirituality. Students also successfully incorporated and applied the theoretical foundations of engaged pedagogy described by Colby, Ehrlic, Beaumont, and Stephens (2003) and specific civic engagement skills enumerated by Battistoni (2002). Finally, students were able to demonstrate their understanding of Bruggemann's (2001) framework for understanding the Psalms in the context of U2's career and concert themes, although that aspect of the course is not the primary focus of this article. Relatedly, students clearly

recognized the potential of music and concerts as a form of activism and engaged spirituality. While the course was not a carefully controlled experiment, the statistical significance of the pre/post-test scores of student knowledge of key concepts suggest they did, indeed, learn.

The course also appears to have been able to shift from a traditional model of direct service through a charity paradigm by having students perform in-direct service in the form of activism and advocacy. Students were actively involved in their learning and played a role in making social change, albeit in a very small way, through activism and advocacy. Finally, the unique approach of a virtual partnership with an organization at-a-distance proved to be a viable strategy. In fact, the work of the campus chapter has garnered attention by the national ONE.ORG and one of the campus events was showcased on its website.

A postscript worthy of note is that HR 2548 – The Electrify Africa Act of 2014 was passed in the House of Representatives at the time this manuscript was written. Some of the students in the class exchanged celebratory and congratulatory email messages noting their own satisfaction in their role as advocates.

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