

ORAL HISTORY OF UTAH PEACE ACTIVISTS PROJECT

UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY

OREM, UTAH

INTERVIEW WITH WARNER WOODWORTH

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Provo, Utah

Interview Conducted by

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Interviewee: Warner Woodworth

Interviewer: Kathryn French

Date: July 14, 2007

Subject: Utah Peace Activists

Place: Provo, Utah

KF: Tell me just a little bit about yourself first.

WW: Well, I've been something of an activist, seeking peace and justice most of my life. Growing up near the central area of Salt Lake City, I was uncomfortable with the ethnic and class divisions in my neighborhood. I later recoiled at the abject poverty and racism in South America I saw as a 20-year old Mormon missionary. While seeking a Ph.D. at the University of Michigan, I joined many marches against the Vietnam War. I also helped design a campus-wide strike against the school's racist admissions policies which eventually led to millions of dollars in new funding and acceptance rates for the state's young disenfranchised Blacks. I labored as a consultant with ministers of other faiths to combat the decline of cities like Detroit, Muskegon, and Grand Rapids where factories were shuttered, unemployment raged, and inner cities burned. I sought to encourage Mormons in Michigan and Ohio to learn from the Black Manifesto why we as Americans needed to support payment of reparations that damaged Black families during four centuries of slavery and discrimination. During my years in Utah I have spent considerable time, money, and pro bono consulting services to empower Native Americans, advocating economic justice for Latinos, especially immigrants, and serving the homeless.

While traveling the world to speak at academic conferences as a BYU professor, I always take time to participate in local struggles, even if only for a short time. For example, I marched against the toxic pollution at Rocky Flats near Denver, Colorado, against factory shutdowns in Pennsylvania and Ohio, and in support of the Dalits (untouchables) in India with 100,000 people from around the globe (2005). For more than a decade I joined civil disobedience campaigns in Nevada to stop nuclear bomb testing. During trips to do humanitarian work in Mali, I joined thousands of Muslim Africans against the U.S. bombing of Iraq that occurred while in their country in December of 1998. I marched in southern Brazil in support of then-presidential candidate Lula, head of the Worker's Party, in solidarity with 80,000 people from around the world hoping George W. Bush would not invade Iraq in 2003. I joined a protest in France which sought to re-instate fired workers who lost their jobs illegally. In New York and other states, I

worked to preserve industrial jobs in various manufacturing towns, collaborating with union leaders, lobbying local, state and federal governments to take action.

During my years at BYU, I also participated in letter-writing campaigns and helped organize protests against General William Westmoreland (Vietnam War commander) and Charles Thomas (Supreme Court justice) when they came to speak at BYU. I joined many students who silently protested the firing of a staff member of student life who spoke out against manipulated student elections. I worked with students and professors to organize a number of peace symposia on campus, as well as occasional protests opposing U.S. intervention in Granada, Panama, and the Arab world. I spoke at a huge BYU teach-in against the senior George H.W. Bush invasion of Iraq in the late 1990s. I organized a large campus teach-in for the Solidarnosc Trade Union of Poland during its struggle for democratic management in the Gdansk shipyards during the 1980s while personally bringing and hosting Marek Garztecki, one of the union leaders to speak at BYU. Over the past decade, I've been involved in a range of peace activities that include joining Salt Lake City Mayor Rocky Anderson in protests against George W. Bush visits to the city. In 2006 I accompanied an Iraq War veteran, Sgt. Marshall Thompson, for a short distance of his walk known as "A Soldier's Peace." He traversed 500 miles by foot across the entire state of Utah to protest the war and call for a withdrawal of US troops.

Finally, perhaps the most recent and significant peace effort I've been involved with has been the planning to protest Dick Cheney's presence and speech at BYU graduation this spring (2007). We opposed his misguided and costly Iraq War, his authorizing of torture, his untruths, and his corrupt values. We generated awareness and outrage around the world through the growing social media of our day. I was the informal faculty advisor to amazing students who sought to fight against the vice president's presence at BYU. When that didn't succeed in blocking his presence, we mobilized demonstrations on and near campus, and planned an Alternative Commencement event outside BYU itself. It was attended by several thousand faculty, students, parents, and supporters from around the state and beyond.

On the domestic front, I'm married to Kaye Colvin Woodworth, and we've raised ten kids, as well as having had several other college students live with us for one or more years. Among the children, we have triplets, as well as two that are adopted, a Mexican and a Brazilian. We live in Provo, but have enjoyed taking a sabbatical every few years to broaden our experience, to get our children out into other cultures, to have more of a global awareness, and an understanding for other people with different values. We can only build greater peace in the world when we truly understand and appreciate differences.

I've been based here at Brigham Young University (BYU) for about three decades now. I teach traditional management courses like leadership and organizational behavior (OB), as well as more innovative or newer courses, such as third world development from a business perspective, microfinance, and social entrepreneurship. I've also taught courses in conflict management, organizational change and consulting, and content like that historically.

KF: Conflict management, organizational behavior.

WW: But then I moved more internationally. I've worked a long time mobilizing students to become global change agents. That's been my basic interest. It's training them how to fight

poverty, how to improve the quality of life for the poor, and in the process generate better relations between and within countries. I have tried to reduce the conflicts and wars and tensions, and build peace within families, within villages, between villages and towns, states, regions and nations.

KF: Who do you work with when you do that?

WW: I have worked with lots of corporation, many government agencies, and various non-governmental organizations (NGOs). With students as colleagues and partners we have done what I call Action Research, collaborating to reduce inequality and human suffering. Together we have started 16 NGOs out of my classes during the last 16 years, about one a year. Actually, we've started more than that. We have established 40-something projects, but the largest which are incorporated as nonprofit organizations total 16, as of now. We've trained approximately 800 students from Brigham Young University, as well as Stanford, VA Tech, Berkeley and other institutions, to go out and spend their summers doing this work to provide microloans to poor families, to resolve conflicts in communities, to build schools and set up literacy programs for families, particularly for the adults, and to do agriculture work and other development programs.

Last year, 2006, we collectively raised some \$10 million and we have now over 1.4 million borrowers in 20-plus countries. My motivation through these years is that I don't want to just work with governments and with the "powers that be," but to work from the grass roots and try to help people locally gain a sense of empowerment, gain some control over their own lives, and have a decent income, and have the resources, to buy the books and send their child to school. Then their child can begin to get a better perspective on life, and be equipped to get a job in the future.

In the process these U.S. students come back from their overseas experience—in some ways it's like a mini Peace Corp, only no bureaucracy—they then come back and start their own programs. We're seeing now the second generation of individuals starting their own efforts with their families and in their business with their business partners, with their law partners in the firm, with their medical staff at the hospital they work, or in the health clinic.

KF: You've been at BYU doing this for how many years?

WW: About thirty years.

KF: Were you doing it also before you came to BYU?

WW: A bit, but not significantly. The first few years I was here, I worked to resolve labor management conflicts. [tape interrupted]. It was mostly U.S. focused. I was working to help employees do something like I'm doing now in the third world, only it was U.S.-based. They weren't little loans. They consisted of much larger loans, financing for employee buy outs. My objective was to help workers in communities here in the U.S. to buy stock and become owners of the firms where they worked. These are called Employee Stock Ownership Plans (ESOPs). In some cases, they were worker-owned cooperatives, known simply as co-ops.

KF: How did you get started with using business as a tool for peace and justice work?

WW: The two are linked in my mind. You get peace from having greater systems of justice.

Social justice, economic well-being. When I was getting my Ph.D. in Ann Arbor at the University of Michigan, I started doing some volunteer work with Native American tribes up in Northern Michigan. And also in Detroit with the African American community. They were both suffering tremendously. There were lots of tensions and a high degree of unemployment. Then as my Ph.D. program progressed, the further I got into it, I saw it was mostly focused on organizational behavior for corporations, for managers. I began to say, "That's great, and we need that. We need those systems to be more effective. But I think I have a moral responsibility to spend part of my time and energy helping those who can't afford my consulting fees." In the corporations, executives could pay for such services, so there was no problem. But in my mind I kept wondering whether organizational behavior had any solutions, any relevance to those broader societal issues? What drove me was working with poor groups and trying to delineate, trying to analyze what were their problems. Did organizational behavior have any solutions, any relevance to those issues?

So I began doing what I call pro bono OB, no charges, free services, like lawyers do with their clients. Over the years, I've tried to get this to become a practice in business schools like ours and others. But it's been very tough to do. Most people want to get their consulting fees. I just decided I'm going to do it. I'm a Mormon. And we give 10 percent of our income to the church. We send young people out to do all kinds of preaching and community service. I decided, I can give 10 percent of my professional time as sort of a "social tithing" to the community.

That's what I've been doing through the decades. Originally it was working with those communities back East, and then when I came here I was doing similar applied work here, helping communities, helping unemployed workers, helping combat plant layoffs, helping diffuse labor management conflicts like out at Geneva, between the steel workers at the U.S. Steel company back East, and the managers here. Over time I figured out how to do that in various firms, and do that well, to solve problems and help workers become owners of their own future, and not only get their paychecks from their salary or their hours, as employees, but also have their dividends as owners of the company.

We found if we did that, those companies became more efficient and more profitable. Workers had a second source of income. Plant closings were reduced, community stability was increased. There was often less family violence compared to what happened to families when bread winners lost their jobs and the plant shut down. Little by little I grew to understand this, and figured out how to effectively strengthen local economies, especially in the so-called "rust belt" region of America. I helped build the worker ownership movement in the U.S. I lobbied the government, went and testified in Congress a number of times about the need for funding to grow these ESOP plans. The first ten years I was here at BYU, I did a lot of that and a little international work. But then that ESOP movement took off, and today we have \$600 billion of stock owned by workers in the companies they work for. Ten million workers own their companies in the U.S. I started to do it in Europe with Poland after the changes there, as well as in Brazil, East Germany and parts of the USSR as the Iron Curtain began to collapse.

As I saw that movement taking off not only in the U.S., but internationally then I began to

say, "Who is not benefitting from this?" I realized that the ones who were still struggling and suffering and rioting and protesting and frustrated were those who had nothing. They were not just laid off from a job, there were no government benefits, and they had no health insurance, and no social security system in third world environments. So I started working with them. My interests in the developing nations really started to become serious in the early 1980s, 1984, 1985.

KF: You mentioned NGOs. What are some of the NGOs you helped establish?

WW: The first really good one we created was started in 1989/90. It was called Enterprise Mentors International (EMI). You can find it on the web at mentorsinternational.org. In that case, my family and I had spent the previous year in Hawaii and there I helped set up some little co-ops while I was teaching. I worked with students and their parents to set up some little worker owned cooperatives out in the fields of Hawaii. Many of those people were Filipinos. When we came back after doing that they said, "Thank you. We've learned. My aunt has a job. My uncle has a job. They have some control over their future. Now we need you to go to the Philippines and help our larger families, our extended families."

So I came back and talked to the school of management dean and said, "I want to start a program to create employment and economic justice in the Philippines, and try to resolve some of the conflicts there." These were huge problems in the Philippines back then. I asked for funding, and while the dean was supportive, he said he didn't have much money for such purposes. But I was informed [tape interrupted]... I then started looking for outside funding. I found an individual, a BYU alumnus, who said he'd give me \$10,000 to get the project going. I needed the money for my students to travel to Asia and live in the Philippines, collecting data and diagnosing the situation so we could then start working on solutions. So we did that.

That was the summer of 1989. At the end of the summer we made a big proposal to create a new NGO called Enterprise Mentors International, in which we would attack poverty and try to slow or even perhaps reverse the situation in the Philippines. Where that nation used to be the number two economy in Asia, by the eighties it was second from the bottom. We said, "What can we do?" They had two major internal battles going on between leftists and the government. The nation's dictator, Ferdinand Marcos had just been thrown out.

There were Islamists moving into Southern Philippines, and up north you had the New People's Army, a leftist military insurrection group. And they were exploiting the fact that most of the Filipinos were poor. Our challenge was, what could we do to help create employment and give people a future, rather than having guys come to their village and offer them an AK-47 rifle and say, "We'll pay you \$5 a week to kill people, shoot soldiers or disrupt." That was our thrust. We saw problems with all that, the decline of the Philippines, the growing turbulence, and out of this we started this new NGO, Enterprise Mentors International (EMI). We created a foundation in the U.S. and a foundation in Manila, the Philippines Enterprise Development Foundation. We raised money and used our expertise here to hire staff there, training these individuals to be NGO consultants and managers. We trained them in methodologies for creating these microenterprises. Then they would go out and do it. They would hold training meetings every Saturday, and they would have 30-50 people show up. Out of those orientation meetings, some people decided they wanted to learn more, and

so they would go through more extensive training. They eventually would get a couple hundred dollar loan, and they'd start a business.

EMI was the first big case. Out of that organization, to date we've trained about 300,000 people. We've raised and given out some \$17 million in loans over the years (as of 2007). I've had a bunch of my students go work with that NGO. I've been going back and forth there since 1989 basically, almost 20 years. Then we moved to the Central Philippines and created another foundation, working with them in the same way. Then we went into the South. Now we have 200 employees in the Philippines running these separate NGOs that we raise the capital for here. The Filipino people run them. In Manila the Philippine Enterprise Development Foundation currently has 12,000 clients. They don't need any more money from us. They're sustainable. They're viable, because they're big enough now that with the interest they charge they can keep their offices open, buy new computers, and pay all their staff. The southern Philippines NGO is becoming sustainable now with thousands of borrowers. The parent NGO, EMI, was also spread to Mexico where we created the *Fundacion Dignidad* (Dignity Foundation) there. And in Guatemala, Enterprise Mentors Guatemala, and in Peru we have an NGO partner there we created two years ago called *Creceer*, meaning "to grow."

So EMI is one of these NGOs, or social enterprises as they are sometimes called. It was the first major one I started. Other such nonprofits have come since then with different purposes, different names and in various countries. Either I found donors here who want to help that country or those people, or I've seen the need, so I've gone out and found donors, and got students trained and prepared. We have had lots of Utahns go on peace and justice expeditions, and go down and help build a school up in Patachancha, way up in the Andes with our Peru foundation called Eagle Condor, or with Chasqui Humanitarian. Others do the same thing in Honduras or wherever.

KF: Do your students help to choose a project? It sounds like it might be pretty obvious as a project comes to you whether they fall into your lap at that time.

WW: When Hurricane Mitch hit Central America in 1998, I went to campus officials, more or less saying, "Let's see if the Marriott School can do anything to help resolve the problems of those people suffering from Mitch." The message I got back was that the school was focused on helping large firms like IBM, General Motors, and Microsoft. So I began to consider whether funds could be raised by the students themselves. To do this, I decided to teach a new course. I called it "How to Change the World." Starting January 1999, I put some flyers around campus. BYU administrators wouldn't free up my time to do another course. I just had to add it to my teaching load. (You know faculty get exploited, chuckle, chuckle.) So besides my regular teaching load I started this other course.

But campus officials were concerned. They basically said, "This is dangerous. Somebody could get hurt." I said, "Yes, 20,000 have already been killed and 20,000 more in Honduras are missing. It's dangerous. But we will work in safe places. Do you want to help fund it?" Unfortunately, BYU officials did not want to help fund it. They said they knew I had a few students working or volunteering in the past in the Philippines, but that the Hurricane Mitch problem was huge and the crisis made it complicated. I was informed that BYU students were mostly just middle class individuals. They didn't have time and energy to do this type of work,

and also to have to pay for the privilege. I was told I was certainly not going to be able to raise the money for this. I said, "We'll see." We had six students show up to the first class on a Monday. It was a Monday/Wednesday class. Wednesday there were about 12. The next week there were 20. The next week there were 30. Mind you, this was back before course offerings were listed on the computer. It was just an informal course. I was lucky to get a room, I guess.

We ended up with something more than 80 students taking the class. There was a self-organizing process of forming different teams. One team worked on where the worst destruction in Central America was, and should we go there? Another team worked on what is microcredit. How does it work and how do we learn how to do this? Another team worked on Spanish business. How do you do business in Spanish? Some students were returned missionaries for the Mormon Church. They were quite fluent in the language, but they didn't know the technical terms for what's a loan and interest. They were working on the business language. Another team was doing fund-raising. It was a self-organizing process to build all these teams. They consisted of a bunch of MBAs and some MPAs, public administration, some accounting, then sociology and Spanish majors.

We had 46 students who went to Central America and spent the summer there. We picked Honduras because it was so badly hit. We called the project HELP Honduras. Amazingly, we raised \$116,000. We started a whole bunch of these new microcredit banks from scratch. We worked with another NGO that was in the country, FINCA, so that they would keep those banks going. I knew once the summer was over students were going to come back to school.

We wanted this to be ongoing. We wanted this to help. Crime had gone up. There was violence. We committed to trying to help rebuild the economy in the hopes that would bring peace and create more justice and help people recover, mostly women, recover from the Hurricane Mitch damage. It was pretty successful. We had some students come back in August, and then turn around and go back down to Honduras. They felt needed.

We had one student who delivered five babies. I said, "Vicky, you delivered five babies? Where were you?" She said she was in a clinic out in the bush in a rural place. There was only one nurse, no doctors and the place was pretty much destroyed. So she just worked out there. She had a team of three others. They stayed there and tried to wash the walls down of the clinic and disinfect it, then dry it, then plaster it, sand it, paint it and get it back up and going. So the government would send a doctor back out there. Meanwhile they had five babies. I said, "How many of them lived?" She said, "They all lived." I said, "Thank goodness." I said, "I didn't even know you were in nursing." She said, "I'm not. I'm in accounting." I said, "Oh, my gosh, what's happening? How can this be?" There were other stories like that from summer 1999. It blew everybody's mind back here at BYU. We had a lot of press coverage. We got companies to donate. We got people from Stanford and other places wanting to go down with us. It just took off. So HELP has been going ever since then.

The next year we changed the name from HELP Honduras to HELP International. "HELP" meaning, *Help ELiminate Poverty*. The next year we expanded. We kept going in Honduras, but we also picked up Venezuela, Peru. Since then it's just grown, and that's where most of these students, probably 500 or so of the 800 have come through HELP. Then others have worked with

Enterprise Mentors on internships and consulting gigs, or with other organizations we have launched.

KF: What was the university's final assessment?

WW: Some officials were okay with it. Others not so much. In fact a few campus leaders were upset with what we were doing. They didn't like us going. I was told the university's lawyers were worried we might be sued. I battled that issue for a couple of years trying to legitimize HELP as a regular BYU-sanctioned and official program. Then I realized, why are we doing this? This is too complicated and it's taking too much time and energy. I want to raise money for going down there. I don't want to spend time dealing with bureaucrats in the Kennedy Center and the BYU Administration Building. So we decided to just spin HELP off and incorporate it as an NGO, like we'd already done a decade earlier with Enterprise Mentors. So we did the same with our student-centered NGO, as well.

Then the Asian tsunami hit in 2005, and we did a similar thing there, started another NGO called Empowering Nations. Seeking to counter the destructive waves that killed hundreds of thousands of people in eleven nations of the Pacific and Indian Ocean, we called our project, Wave of Hope. We went to Thailand. We had 100 people go there and we helped rebuild three villages.

KF: Did your students do something similar in New Orleans?

WW: No, we didn't do anything there.

KF: Have they ever chosen projects in this country?

WW: Uh-huh. We could do a lot. We made a strategic decision on New Orleans, that we knew there were going to be billions of dollars donated, and we knew there would be thousands of Americans going down to help there. And it was during the academic year. We felt like we could either spend our time, money and energy on Katrina, or we could start planning for the next year in the third world, which we did instead. Because we knew that there would be lots of effort, lots of attention in Louisiana. It would be a lot cheaper to go there, but we knew the people in Banda Aceh or Thailand, that it's much more complicated to get aid to them and help set up NGO systems there. A microloan in New Orleans was \$7,000. A microloan in Thailand was \$80.

We can't do everything. We can't go everywhere. We didn't go to Pakistan when the earthquake hit there and 75,000 died, because we didn't have capacity. It was very dangerous, and we didn't have the funding. We didn't have volunteers who spoke the language. It's always a dilemma for me in terms of where we intervene, and how much do we intervene. We constantly go over these battles. In some cases it's been a crisis response, like Mitch or like the tsunami in Asia.

In other cases it's been because we've got a request from people in Mozambique, for instance, the third poorest country on the planet. A group in Arizona responded first and established Care for Life. This was after fifteen years of civil war. A lot of tensions were still in the air. And folks there were saying, "We need help to rebuild our lives and our villages and our economy. Otherwise, we're going to go back into another war again." Arizona Mormons started it up a few

years ago, and we've been working with them there for two or three years. We do that, and we don't do others.

We have gotten microcredit here in Provo a couple of years ago. It's called MicroBusiness Mentors. When these kids take my microfinance classes they have to do a project, either assess an existing NGO and do some consulting or training, or write a critique of it or something. Or they can start their own project, they can design something new. About half do one and half do the other every semester. Four years ago a group said, "We want to do some microcredit in Provo? Why haven't you done it?" I said, "Because students haven't been interested. But I feel like we should be doing something locally, especially with the Latino population."

So we started this project. It's growing and we've given out a number of loans and done a lot of training. Now some Utah Bankers are coming in with some big bucks to help us do that. This is necessary because what we found is in our little inner city Provo, many of those Latino families struggle with domestic violence. It's huge. Unemployment is extremely high. Instability. The immigrants come up from Guatemala or Costa Rico, or Mexico. They rent a place downtown, cheap, from slum lords. But they can't get steady jobs. They can't get enough money. So after two or three months, they're kicked out of that apartment. They go to another one. Their children are pulled out of one school and put in another. The average is two and a half schools per child per year. It's a huge problem. And there is a lot of substance abuse, alcohol abuse, sexual abuse, spouse violence, and so forth.

We started this project after getting a bunch of those numbers and trying to make sense out of them and trying to figure out if microcredit could work here. If so, how much would a loan require so that subset of the population could make a difference and resolve some of those tensions within the family? We finally determined \$500 loans. We can do that. If they go through eight training modules, then we give them \$500. If they pay it off, then they can get a \$1,000 loan, then \$2,000. Then we're going to move them to the banks and let the banks operate \$4,000 loans and higher.

KF: What do they take the loans out for?

WW: Pretty much third world stuff. It's a little different here and it costs us more here. For example, Maria Louisa came here from Central America with her husband and a couple kids. She was about age 35. They came here illegally. They're going to have a better life for their kids. He took off and left her with the two kids. She doesn't speak English. She has very little education. But she had worked part time as a beautician back home. She heard about our program. She came and said, "I could really use a \$500 loan. I'll start a business being a beautician." We said, "You've got to go through training. We don't want to just give out money. You've got to pay it back. It's not welfare. It's not a gift. "You've got to pay it back with interest. We want to help you maximize your chance of success." She said, "That would be great. I know how to do hair somewhat, but I don't know anything about business."

She just worked in a shop, and somebody else ran the business in Latin America. Today it's a great little business she's got. She got her loan and went out and bought clippers and scissors and the aprons and the oils. I don't know what you call that stuff. But for

\$500 she could afford to open an actual shop. The upshot of it is she got her loan, she got her stuff and she made some little flyers and put them up in the *mercados*, the Spanish/Latino markets, with her cell number. People call her. And she started going door to door in the inner city, cutting kids hair for \$2 versus a barbers \$8. Cutting the husband's hair for \$5. Doing the woman's hair for \$7 or \$8. It's like she's a walking barbershop. She's a walking beautician. It's amazing. She's done quite well.

Another client bought tools. He had job offers, but they required him to have his power tools to be a construction worker. So he bought tools and started doing that. Then he started his own company after he learned framing and stuff like that. They're not high tech jobs. But they're feeding families and keeping stability and generating a little bit of social justice in the community. So we've tried this for several years, and we've had some success.

When they graduate we give them a certificate. We give them a check, and we give them a mentor. We assign a Spanish speaking mentor. Some of them are older individuals who have had some business success. Others are partially retired. But they want to help. They want to be involved. They want to use their language and they want to share their business acumen, their business skills. This NGO is called MicroBusiness Mentors. Now that we have the banks on board and we're starting to get the \$10,000 donations and \$50,000, we're going to start moving beyond Utah Valley Latinos to Salt Lake and also to recruit African Americans and Tongans where there's some violence and a lot of unemployment and we'll try to expand into these ethnic groups.

KF: You've done peacemaking internationally, here in the local community, pretty much similar techniques.

WW: Yes, similar techniques...Economic empowerment bringing justice and more community peace.

KF: What are your goals with your students?

WW: In my classes or in the work they do?

KF: In these programs, in your classes. Here you're teaching them.

WW: I'm teaching them skills for making change. It's how to look at a situation, a community, a company, a village, a family. I seek to help them diagnose problems, collect data, not just assume they know everything, not just observe and think you understand it, and then design with them some solutions.

It's a participatory approach to problem solving. One of my old friends was William Foote Whyte, a professor at Cornell. He's the only American academic who was president of the American Sociological Association and the American Industrial Relations Association, and the American Anthropological Association. He is an impressive guy. I learned a lot from him about social change. He did it mostly as theory until the last decade of his life when I came on the scene, and we started partnering on a couple of projects. He was always really interested in how can we apply this stuff in communities. I'm trying to teach students. I'm having them read Bill's articles on action research and becoming a global change agent.

There's this hot new term called *social entrepreneurship*. That means somebody who is like a business entrepreneur in a sense. Traditional entrepreneurs see a market, they see a product, they see a service. The business entrepreneur wants to go make money from that, provide that service or product and get rich.

In contrast, the social entrepreneur sees a social problem, sees a conflict, sees tension, sees suffering and says, "I want to invent a solution to reduce that human suffering." They are not doing it for the money, but they're setting up a project and they're collecting data. I'm trying to get students to think like social entrepreneurs, see problems that the private sector isn't resolving or solving. Business says, "It's not our problem. It's not on our agenda." And the government, the public sector says, "It's not our problem either." We're looking for the needs in between those two big sectors historically that got most of the attention and most of the money and most of the success, I suppose.

We're saying, "What's not being addressed by the government or by business, and how could we identify those problems that are falling through the cracks, those people that are falling through the cracks, and invent a new sector. We call it the social sector, or third sector or civil sector. In contrast to the business or government, which are big top down programs, ours is bottom up. Ours is experimental. I'm trying to teach students to see the world that way and realize they don't have to watch CNN and see children dying in Darfur and do nothing about it. They can be empowered to go do something. They still don't believe it. Sometimes they think: "We're just students." The President of the University says, "They're just middle class kids." The Dean declares, "They can't (or won't) raise the money."

But in our second year of HELP, we raised \$260,000. What I'm saying to my students is, "You've got all kinds of potential and you can do it. You don't need to go to China and do it there. You can do it in your own community." We should look locally as well as globally. There are different stages of life when you can do more or less, and students shouldn't all go work for NGOs, or the UN, or USAID, or corporate America. But wherever you are, and whether you're a housewife raising four kids in Orem, Utah, or a minister in the Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe, or you're a typical American male working in your high tech firm, you can act when you see suffering. You can do something. You can use your company's resources. You can use your family's resources. You can use your personal time. Maybe you can't give any money, but you could give a few days a year to a project, and go with Habitat for Humanity, and help put a house out there in Spanish Fork. That's it. That's what I'm trying to teach them.

KF: You are Mormon. There are millions of Mormons.

WW: For good or evil, chuckle, chuckle.

KF: You are working in a business school, teaching. Most Mormons do not do the kinds of social change that you're involved with. What made you different?

WW: I don't know about that. It's a good question. I think the Mormons I know internationally want to do this. The national ones, the Americans, the local ones especially, they're more myopic. What I am finding—with not just Mormons, I work a lot with Catholics, I work some with Muslims—is that many of those people are the same way. Millions of

Catholics do much good. Millions more just sit on their “rear end,” for example. I’ve met and a former student of mine has been working with a Buddhist leader in Thailand named Sulak. He’s saying, “We have 40 million Buddhist monks who sit outside the temple smoking and eating, 20 hours a day, meditating on the meaning of life. I see what you’re doing with your Mormon kids, and I want to do the same with these monks. I want to get these young monks activated.” He calls it “engaged Buddhism.” So now I guess I’m trying to create engaged Mormons.

I don’t know where it came from for me. My perspective is this: There are a large number of Mormons in my academic and professional field--organizational behavior. It’s a disproportionate amount. Many more Mormons have been getting Ph.D.s over the last thirty or forty years, than any other religious group, in terms of percentages.

I think it’s because our religion teaches us, we’re free agents, we *can* do things, we *can* fix things. We go on missions and we see families transformed. We come back and say, “I want to keep doing something like that forever.” It’s not just that they’re spiritual. They go and put the roof on the house. They go and dig out the mud from the flooded neighborhood.

I think there’s a kind of unique thing in Mormonism. There’s a lot of scriptures that talk about you being an agent unto yourself. You should “do many things of your own free will” and choice. Like most people in the world, many Mormons would rather sit in the big Lazy Boy chair, and have the remote and their root beer, (not their *real* beer), and watch T.V. But what I’m finding is when you start talking about a lot of our theology about activists, about social change, about you improving the world, you are not a passive preacher.

I find a lot of members of the Church say, “Wow, yes, you’re right.” Our pioneers did a lot of stuff. They created 400 United Orders that were focused on peace, justice and equality. And most of our members don’t know that history very much. When I get articles or write articles about these matters and share it with them, they respond. They say, “Yeah, I can do things, as well.” The big goal with these students, you were asking about, what do I want to teach the students, really what I’m trying to teach them is a vision of their own potential, that they can make change in the world. When they come back from Honduras or the Philippines, there will be this ripple effect down through the years of them starting some family project, or starting some other NGO. Maybe they can only write a check for ten years because their career is eating up their lives.

But I see a lot of potential there, and I’m finding lots of members of the Church wanting to respond. Even deans. I have a dean now who loves this stuff. I went to him and said, “I’ve got a donor that wants to give us some big bucks, if we can make this an official part of the Marriott School.” He said, “How much?” I said, “I don’t know. Let’s meet with him.” So a student and I, along with the dean, met with him. As I recall, the dean said to the individual: “Could you give us \$85,000?” The dean thought he was asking a real high risk question. The potential donor said, “No, hold on. Let’s not talk money. Let’s just talk concept.” Two weeks later we met with the individual again. He ended up giving us \$3 million. The dean had a growing view of future possibilities. I’m trying to create a bigger, faster vision.

BYU agreed to hire one of my students to run this program called the Center for Economic Self Reliance (CESR). It's mostly been a research focus. It's not activist. It's not in the trenches as I like to do. I use the classroom to teach the principals and strategies. I use the center to fund research, and then we spin these NGOs off. That's where they can actually go do it.

KF: Think back. When was the first time that you tried to make a difference?

WW: That's getting complicated. Maybe senility is setting in. That could be a problem. My parents taught me to do stuff, to go help the elderly neighbor. There was mowing the lawn. There was going out to volunteer at the LDS church soap factory in our stake in Salt Lake which had been there. It started as a United Order in the 1800s. It was making bars of soap, shampoo, liquid soap and all that, and then go sell it. I saw that that was a way to give some sweat equity to help people afford cheap soap, and the church gave it away, or sold it for a nickel a bar.

Then on my mission, that was really a wake-up call. I went to Brazil. I had never seen poverty like that. When I saw the poverty there...(I grew up in inner city Salt Lake so there were poor people). But we didn't know we were poor. In Brazil it was beggars on the street and people dying along the roads. I began to say, "We need to help these people temporally, not just spiritually. Not just preach religion. We need to do service." My mission president was very supportive, and we did a lot of that. Then when I went to Michigan to seek my Ph.D., I started in the inner city. That was the big formal wake up call, I guess, about "Wow, we can use Organizational Behavior (OB) ideas about strategy and structure and management, about solving problems and creating systems to solve problems." In my experience, I saw that it not only worked for Ford, and Chrysler, and GM, it also worked for inner city Detroit. It was working in the black communities, and working in the Native American areas. That was probably the official wake up call for me.

KF: You had been primed.

WW: Yes, by my mom, especially. Hers was one-on-one charity. That was fantastic. That's where I learned it. Later I began to see, one plus one equals more than two. We can improve a whole system, a whole family, a whole village. I recall Hyatt Clark Company in New Jersey. GM was going to shut the plant down and 3,000 people would lose their jobs. We went as consultants and created an alternative system, an ESOP (Employee Stock Ownership Plan). The workers would run it and control their futures. That is the change I seek in the world.

KF: You've done this in more than one state, because you started out in Michigan. I'll call it peace and justice making, [that] is what you're doing. Is it different in Utah from other states?

WW: Not really. I thought it would be. But when I got here as a new professor in the 1970s, I realized they've got similar problems here. In some ways I suppose there is more of a conservative political environment here these days, but there wasn't when I was growing up. Utah was a Democratic state during all my years as a youth. Democratic governors, Democratic legislature. That's changed. Mostly from the Californians moving in, Orange County people, and so forth. Big bureaucracies try to suffocate change everywhere, whether it's here [or somewhere else]. I'm freer to do things here at BYU. I've been a visiting professor at four or five other schools. I'm much more free here than anyplace else. In spite of the

resistance, and in spite of university legal concerns.

I think partially that's because I can draw on our common religious tradition, and I can find those examples of stories that motivate people here. When I went to Rio, or when I was a scholar in Switzerland, or going back as a visiting professor at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, it was really hard to do this kind of work. Here at BYU there are social networks and linkages. There is this spiritual mandate to improve the world. There's this notion from every LDS church general conference about being better neighbors and solving the problems in our community. There are pros and cons to the work of peace making and social justice. But in most ways I'd argue that I've been able to do more here than I could have elsewhere.

KF: Does the Church ever call on you to do this as humanitarian work?

WW: Yes. I don't know if you know what the Church does. They have this Perpetual Education Fund, to fund poor third world returned missionaries. I began pushing for the Church to create its own NGO charity in the late seventies, early eighties. It took 15 years. They finally did. Did they listen? Yes, over time. It became known as Latter-day Saint Charities. It had to go through a lot of iterations, a lot of tensions, but they did. Then in 2000 they created the Perpetual Education Fund, something I had started saying we need for return missionaries after their third world missions. The kids who leave Utah and go out, or they leave California and go to Seoul or Tokyo, they come back from their missions, and they stand up in church and say, "This is the greatest two years of my life. It's the beginning of a whole new world. I learned leadership. I learned Korean. I learned Mandarin. I learned strategies of organizing. I learned how to do PR and confront people and go to their doors, and have courage and interpersonal skills and team building methods. I learned all that stuff." They go on to college, and they meet the beauty queen, and they get their Mercedes Benz and have their law degree.

The Mormon missionaries in the third world, they go back from their missions, and now they're back in a house with twelve people, and they're sleeping on the floor with five brothers and sisters. They're eating one meal a day. On their mission they got three meals a day. On their mission they wore white shirt and ties. Now they're wearing a t-shirt and shorts. That's all. And flip flops. They can't afford to get married. They can't afford to go to school. They don't have an education to get in school even if they could afford it. Many of them can't even afford bus fare to church. I began doing research on them and saying to some church officials in Salt Lake, "In Peru 80 percent of our returned missionaries are inactive within a year. They've got no future. They're depressed." In the Philippines, they were joining the New People's Army (NPA). After their missions the guys came with guns and said, "You've got no future. Here's a gun. You shoot bankers for us and we'll fund you." I began to say, "We need to create something like the pioneers had," which in their day in the 1850s and 1860s was called the Perpetual Emigration Fund, to bring the Europeans, the converts from South Africa, the converts from Sweden, the converts from the South Pacific here to Utah to build Zion. I began to say, "We need a Perpetual *Education* Fund to help those kids." It took 12 years. They finally set it up.

Now they give loans for those young men and women, about half and half. So this

Bolivian kid comes back from his mission. With the PEF he can get a loan to go to technical school, learn how to be an electrician, and then get a job. Or in Argentina, a young LDS woman comes back from her mission. Now the church pays for her tuition to learn how to be a seamstress. Then she can go to work in a sewing factory run by Banana Republic or whatever. Initiatives like these are empowering the returned missionaries and helping them have a better future.

KF: Is there anything else you'd like to share?

WW: You've already got more than you can handle. I don't think so. We see what's going on in Iraq. We saw what went on in the Cold War. I think the solutions aren't going to be the Big Boys playing and shooting and blowing each other up. They are going to be down in the trenches of the marginalized, in the grass roots of the poor where people can make change. I'm hopeful we'll have a world of peace and justice, and resolve a lot of these problems. It's not going to be done by big business or big government.

KF: That's great. Do you have any other suggestions for people for me to interview?