

Kony 2012: Humanitarian Work or Narcissistic Consumer Activism?

By Brendan Dugan

With over 78 million views and counting, Invisible Children's (IC) KONY 2012 awareness campaign captured international attention in the span of a few days.

Uploaded March 5, the 30-minute video "aims to make Joseph Kony famous...to raise support for his arrest and set a precedent for international justice," according to IC. Kony leads the rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), which terrorized the Acholi region in Northern Uganda until 2006 through rape, sex slavery, murder, and kidnapped children-made-soldiers, or kadogo.

Initially, this sounds like a humanitarian organization rallying well-intentioned people towards a good cause. A bit of scrutiny, however, reveals a number of problems with the methods of IC.

IC co-founder, board member, and director/narrator of the video Jason Russell holds a degree in Cinematic Production from the University of Southern California, and points to numerous celebrities as his role models, according to an 2011 interview with PMC Magazine.

Oprah, Bono, Steven Spielberg, Walt Disney, and Steve Jobs are among his heroes and heroines, i.e.,

he models after a media celebrity, a musical celebrity, a videomaker celebrity, an artist celebrity, and a corporate celebrity, all of whom are textbook examples of, well, celebrities. To be sure, Martin Luther King, Mahatma Gandhi, Mother Teresa, Malcom X, or Dorothy Day acquired something of celebrity status, but that was secondary to their activism, not vice versa.

Nothing of course is wrong with his heroes and heroines, or that he might lack the formal understanding of activism and social change. Rather, how they shape IC's approach is a problem. Take for example how the video focuses more on IC's work than on the complex issue itself, which the video simplifies and dramatizes. These are not the things that make social change, let alone an activist.

"I am a rebel soul, a dream evangelist," who wants to "redefine international justice" and "the concept of humanitarian work," Russel said in the same interview with PMC Magazine. As prone to idealistic visions as I can be, even this seems clearly unrealistic.

"There's something inherently misleading, naive, maybe even dangerous, about the idea of rescuing children or saving Africa...It hints uncomfortably of the White Man's

Burden," said Yale political scientist Chris Blattman. Ugandans and other Africans who watched the video were quick to pick up on this, and many criticized or outright disapproved of the video, as a number of YouTube posts may attest.

"The White Savior Industrial Complex is not about justice. It is about having a big emotional experience that validates privilege," said Nigerian writer Teju Cole via Twitter Mar 8. "Close to 1.5 million Iraqis died from an American war of choice. Worry about that."

"It's not simply a matter of flicking a switch and saying, yep, we voted. Let's stop Kony now," said freelance journalist Michael Wilk-

INVISIBLE TRUTH

KONY 2012

SWAGIVISM
&
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erson, who's lived and reported in Uganda. when featured on NPR to speak about the issue Mar 8.

As the video explains, the International Criminal Court called for the arrest of Kony in 2005 for crimes against humanity and war crimes. In 2006, the Ugandan army forced the LRA out of Uganda to parts of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Central African Republic, and Sudan, after the LRA continually refused to sign peace agree- see **KONY**, pg. 2

The university continues to grow

By Michael Schrader

Fact: Marian University is expanding.

Assistant Vice President of Enrollment, Dr. Jack Powell, records that for the year 2012-2013 the University expects around 350 incoming freshman, a significant increase over last year's 300.

"We are growing our enrollment of international students," added Powell. "We expect that 20 of our incoming freshman will be [international students]."

Of the 350, 60 are expected to join the School of Business, 43 the School of Education, 65 the School



The "New Hall" as students have been calling it, is scheduled to be finished by Fall 2012 to help accommodate for the growing population.

of Mathematics and Sciences, 65 the School of Nursing, 11 unclassified, and the biggest number, 106, will join the School of Liberal Arts, according to Powell.

Photo by Michael Schrader

The School of Mathematics and Sciences (SOMAS) has also seen great increase over several years, from only 84 students in 2007 to currently 160, with an expected 180 in the fall of 2012.

"I do not know if there is any one thing that has generated such a growth product," said Dean of Mathematics and Sciences, Dr. Loren Bertocci. "I have tried to be as active...as possible, so that I can do whatever I can to put a positive and public face on Marian University and the [SOMAS]."

When he first arrived, Dr. Bertocci said SOMAS made up only 7% of the total traditional student body. Now, SOMAS represents more than 11% and by the fall of 2012 are

expected to represent 13%.

Dr. Paul Evans, Dean of Marian University College of Osteopathic Medicine (MUCOM), said the medical school might be a cause of future growth in the SOMAS.

"Once the medical school gets up and running, there will be a lot of high school students that have an interest in medicine [who] will say 'I'll go be a biology or chemistry major at Marian because they have a medical school.'"

MUCOM also seeks to increase the university's population. Dr. Evans expects the College to bring in many students.

Currently MUCOM awaits accreditation and expects to begin the see **GROWTH**, pg. 3

DO YOU CHEAT?

Marian students prove to be honest academically.

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SPRING BREAK

Campus ministry hosts another successful alternative spring break.

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ROSARY WALK

Faculty, staff, and students welcome the new addition to campus with a commemoration ceremony

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ments.

Since then, the Ugandan government has launched programs to initiate interior recovery. Last year 100 Special Forces advisors, by order of U.S. President Barack Obama, aided the Ugandan army as it sought the LRA across these three countries.

Yet in spite of U.S. and Ugandan government efforts, only once during the video does Russell admit that Uganda is “relatively safe,” instead focusing attention on the fact that Kony is “still out there,” glossing over the fact that he has lost much of his power.

While Kony is indubitably a criminal of horrendous magnitude and ought to be found and tried, a number of issues have been raised regarding the campaign.

The campaign specifically targets youth. A quick check of the publicly available YouTube statistics reveals that, of registered users, the majority of females who watched the video are between the ages of 13 and 17 (18 to 24 for males). IC acknowledges in its 2011 annual report that youth account for the majority of its support, and are predominantly responsible for its 60% growth last year.

It would be difficult for IC to argue that teenagers can make politically informed decisions regarding such a complex issue by means of this video alone or with the scarce resources on their website. The majority of females who watched

**Do you
know
who this
man is?**

He needs to be stopped.



the video are not even eligible to vote, yet are solicited for money and political support.

IC admits that within the viral video “many nuances of the 26-year conflict are admittedly lost or overlooked,” and that it is only an “entry point to the conflict,” according to the Critique page of their website invisiblechildren.com. This may be so.

However, “nuances” being “overlooked” softens the reality that approximately 23 minutes of the video focus on sentimental clips of Russell’s son, vague hints of social transformation, cinematic highlights of the campaign, and an advertisement for their “activist kit” product, while a mere 6 minutes describe the conflict or Kony’s activities.

If one purchased one of these before they sold out, “people will think you’re an advocate of awesome” with your activist (“swagtivist” or “slacktivist,” as some ob-

servers have labeled it) shirt, bracelets, stickers, and buttons.

The problem is not that IC targets youth or funds its campaigns in Central Africa by providing commodities to consumers per se. After all, TOMS and Ethos water, among other nominally philanthropic companies, do much of the same. Rather, the problem lies in the fundamental message this type of activism conveys.

Can we as human beings genuinely practice benevolence, activism, or civic duty by simply buying things – by sharing a video or tweet from our iPhones or personal computers, without leaving the security of our routines?

Yes, social media facilitated in part the Arab Spring and Occupy movements, but that does not mean social media will inevitably transform the social order of the world or invariably bring about justice, as the video suggests and Russel believes.

And yes, some funds raised by donation and selling products go to direct services for the Central African campaigns. All of 32.4% of IC’s expenditures went to direct services in 2011, according to its financial report.

Regardless, we need caution regarding such consumer activism and humanitarian injunctions to act (vicariously) against social ills, particularly when some of the same sort of troubles happen here, such as sex trafficking, and while other, less apparent forms of violence occur within the day-to-day functions of Western life.

IC works to increase the accessibility and infrastructure of education in Northern Uganda, lobbies the US Government, established radio warnings, search and rescue teams, and similar operations to address issues stemming from the LRA, according to its website.

So IC does its share of work in raising awareness, however inaccurately, searching for the dwindled LRA, and implementing recovery efforts in Central Africa.

But before buying in to the latest humanitarian cause, we should do the research and get informed of the efficacy and methods of the group asking for our support. Do the means justify the ends?

Moreover, the next time we feel compelled to “do something,” we ought to look at what we can do, right here.

Growth, from page 1

application for students in the fall of 2012.

“Part of the process to has to due with the types of students we are going to get,” said Evans. “This is the only Catholic osteopathic school in the country, so there will be a group of students who are very interested in the continuation of their Catholic Education or are looking for a continuation in faith based learning.”

Evans also expects Marian to attract more international students with MUCOM.

Powell further said that reasons for the expansion come from a greater appreciation of Marian University. “A greater number of prospective students are aware of the university of the University.”

Also, like Bertocci, Powell noted the importance of creating Marian’s public appearance.

“I have made recent visits to several local high schools, and the Guidance Counselors all tell me the same thing: There is a greater interest in Marian University and the reputation...is at an all time high.”

Professional Writing students write proposals

By Bradley Levi

The Professional Writing class, taught by Professor Wendy Vergoz, is writing proposals, memos, professional letters, and resumes to let students shift from academic to professional writing.

“We analyze documents very closely, whether they’re professional models or students’ own work, looking for strengths and weaknesses in content, tone, format, etc.,” Said Vergoz.

Many students consider the class beneficial because they gain knowl-

edge about professional writing before entering the work force.

“I would certainly recommend this class, especially to business students, because a big part of communication in the work place happens by e-mail, and how you write really has an effect on people’s impressions of you as an employee,” said former Professional Writing student Hannah Stahlhut.

Right now, there are only nine

students enrolled, so the course consists of hands-on learning, workshops, and writing.

“This is a class which gives students practical skills to carry into the future,” said Vergoz.

If you are interested in professional writing, you can sign up for the Eng 239 course in the Fall.



Photo by Michael Schrader
Students and Faculty are forced to take another route as construction on the drainage system takes over Cold Spring Road.

Marian University hosts World Quest

By Hadeiyah Ameen

The Annual Academic World Quest Competition of 2012, sponsored by the World Affairs Council was hosted by Marian University on Feb 25. This year marks the 10th annual competition for the World Affairs Council, and Marian University has hosted this event for the past several years.

Excitement and nervousness flared as the teams prepared to display their genius on world issues. Teams from Arsenal Tech High School, East Chicago Central High School, MTI School of Knowledge, and Warren Central High School took their places with determined faces. The teams were tested on ten different topics with ten questions per topic. The topics included focused on the top six national security issues facing the USA in the run off to the 2012 presidential election. High school students debated on US Education, US Energy Policy, US Economic Competitive-

ness, Middle East Affairs, Afghanistan/Pakistan, China, NATO, and Millennium Goal topics: Child Health, Azerbaijan, and Current Events.

The room remained silent as the audience watched the contestants answer tough and specific questions. With questions ranging from names of Presidents of specific countries to the percentage and ratio of certain developments in other countries, it was anybody's game. As the judges convened to declare a winner, participants and the audience anxiously chatted as they awaited the ruling.

MTI School of Knowledge came out on top of the 2012 Academic World Quest competition. They will represent Indiana in the National Competition in Washington D.C. in April. MTI School of Knowledge, Marian's neighboring school located at 2850 Cold Spring Rd, is a private Islamic school for students K-12th grade. MTI en-



Photo by Hadeiyah Ameen
The winners of the 2012 Academic World Quest competition was the MTI School of Knowledge.

joyed its second year as regional World Quest champions as well as Indiana representatives in the national competition. They represented Indiana at Nationals in 2010 where they ranked as one of the top ten teams in the nation.

The relief, astonishment, and joy on the Muslim student's faces were

obvious for everyone to see. Sana, an 11th-grader said, "It's a great experience because it teaches you a lot about global issues." Other MTI contestants said they were nervous but had a great time and look forward to participating again.

Students spend spring break serving others

By Bradley Levi

Twenty-two students participated in the Alternative Spring Break program to serve others through community service projects and activities.

This year, the participants could choose one of four locations to serve: Chicago, Indianapolis, Tohatchi, New Mexico, and rural Owen County, near Bloomington.

"[I enjoyed the] cultural interactions that we've had with the Navajo [in New Mexico]," said Jessica Williams, one of the site leaders for the Alternative Spring Break trip in Tohatchi.

Many of the students and faculty

members who participated said they had a life-changing experience.

"Alternative Spring Break was a beautiful experience for me as it assured my notions that I would like to teach kids in inner-city areas," said Sylvia Denice, a participant in the Alternative Spring Break trip in Chicago. "It is one of the most rewarding, gratifying, and fulfilling experiences offered and available to students over Spring Break."

The program for many students and faculty members is a life-changing program that is highly recommended by Campus Minis-

tries.

"It's a wonderful opportunity to gain friendships, do service, and discover who you are in different types of situations," said Megan Gehrich, one of the site leaders for the Alternative Spring Break trips in Owen County.



Photo provided by Lara
Alternative Spring Break students did service in four different locations this year.

Participants

New Mexico

Julie Rowe
Paige Prather
Matthew Duncan
Ashley Bartley
Billy Thompson
Joann Derbiszewski
Jessica Williams
Nicholas Soellner
Advisors:
Jimmy Cox
Robert Golobish

Indianapolis

Bradley Levi
Colleen Curtin
Melinda Weiss
Margaret Blandford
Delaney Arnoldy
Lara Kuczmanski
Lauren Hacker
Advisors:
Nick Aylward
Matt Nelson

Chicago

Kelsea Manion
Katie Copeland
Sylvia Denice
Cassy Brown
Mary Kate Hosty
Ana Ruiz
Clay Kendrick
Advisors:
Melody Lynch-Kimery
Ashley Hardy

Owen County

Bren Doyle
Kristen Keers
Amy Seger
Claire Callahan
Andrew Hess
Tanner Wilson
Justin Wedgewood
Megan Gehrich
Advisors:
Debbie Burks
Jeanne Hidalgo

Marian commemorates Rosary Walk

By Brendan Dugan



The Marian Shrine and Rosary Walk commemoration ceremony was held on March 2.

Close to seventy people witnessed the elements Friday morning, March 2, for the commemoration of the Marian Shrine and Rosary Walk.

The Shrine and Rosary Walk are collaborated San Damiano Scholar projects of seniors Amy Garner, Karen McNulty, Andrea Fleak, and Amy Seger respectively. Construction began early winter and concluded before March this year, after the projected completion date of December 8.

Prayer led by Sr. Barbara Piller, singing, and a speech by President

Dan Elsner constituted the commemoration ceremony, emceed by VP of Mission Effectiveness Sister Jean Marie. The Italian-sculpted Mary statue designed by Nick Ring now rests atop a pedestal in the center of the shrine.

A further celebration of the Marian Shrine and Rosary Walk will occur March 26, after the 4:30p.m. Mass in Bishop Chatrand Chapel around 5:20p.m.



Photo by Micheal Schrader
President Dan Elsner spoke at the commemoration ceremony.

“Good and gracious God, we come today to dedicate this sacred space to your mother, Mary, the handmaid of the Lord. We pray in thanksgiving for the students who birthed this dream, for faculty and staff who supported them in their dream. We thank you for the minds and hands of the artists who designed and transformed this piece of mother earth into this place of prayer where we honor Mary, our model and mother.”

Academically Honest University

By Brendan Dugan

Academic honesty pervades the student body of Marian University.

On an annual basis, only 20 cases of academic dishonesty arise.

“It seems fairly clear that violations are rare,” said Dean of Academic Affairs William Harting.

Seven broad violations of academic honesty are enumerated in the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities contained in every Marian University planner: cheating, plagiarism, multiple submissions, fabrication, misuse of materials, misrepresentation, and facilitation of academic honesty. One can find the repercussions and proceedings for violations of aca-

demically honest there as well.

Essentially, first-time offenders risk losing credit for whatever material they cheated on, or course failure. After that, students who cheat may be suspended or expelled from Marian. In the first case, students may appeal to have the case reviewed, while a panel is set up for the sole purpose of hearing cases with a history of offenses.

Much of academic dishonesty occurs in 100- and 200-level courses, which are mostly taken by lower-classmen. Harting explains that this “certainly make sense” because such courses, “are the ones during which a student is learning certain

rules of academic writing which may be unfamiliar to them from their previous studies at the secondary level.”

Most of the violations tend to happen in courses from the School of Liberal Arts, which also makes sense as approximately 60% of registrations are at the 100- and 200-level courses fall within that discipline, as do much of the required general education courses. No information is kept regarding the major program, sex, class level, or other characteristics of individuals who have had cases brought against them.

800 years of St. Clare

By Brendan Dugan

“I may not be an expert on her, but I have a great admiration for her.” Said Fr. John Doctor about St. Clare. On Tuesday March 13th, Marian students and faculty gathered in the library auditorium to hear Fr. John talk about the prophetic voice of St. Clare. This year, Palm Sunday will mark 800 years since St. Clare left her paternal home and begin her new life under the guidance of St. Francis.

Fr. John discussed the importance of St. Clare’s message, both in her time and in ours. Historically, St. Clare lived a radical gospel lifestyle. Dr. John talked about both Francis and Clare’s love for the poor and, their devotion to living out the gospels. “Clare once said, ‘Holy Father, on no account, now or ever, throughout eternity do I wish to be dispensed from the following of Christ.’ (LegCl14) Fr. John used the quote in his speech to emphasize the devotion Clare had to Jesus.

Fr. John is the Vice President for Mission and Ministry at Quincy University in Quincy, Illinois.

Mission Statement

The Knight Times is a student newspaper dedicated to serving the Marian University student community. Our goal is to inform the Marian community about campus, local, and global issues. We strive to report the stories that matter and take student opinions and comments into consideration. We want you to read, comment, and enjoy!

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