

University of Windsor Faculty of Law Social Justice Fellowship

Brian Pipe Summer 2007

The International Justice Mission is a Christian agency, led by human rights professionals, that help people overseas suffering injustice and oppression who cannot rely on local authorities for relief. The agency documents and monitors conditions of abuse and oppression, educates the church and public about the abuses, and mobilizes intervention on behalf of the victims.

IJM has field offices in 16 developing countries. Each office has a four fold purpose.

1. **Victim Relief** - Relieve the victim of the abuse currently being committed.
2. **Perpetrator Accountability** - Bring accountability and just consequences under the law to the specific perpetrator(s) of abuse.
3. **Structural Prevention** - Prevent the abuse from being committed against others who are also at risk by strengthening community factors that are likely to deter potential oppressors, reduce the vulnerability of at-risk populations and empower local authorities to stop such abuses.
4. **Victim Aftercare** - Provide access to services to help victims transition to their new lives and to encourage long-term success.

Gary Haugen, the president of IJM, started the charity in 1996 following his work in Rwanda working for the US State Department prosecuting war criminals. Gary is a world class leader and his influence is felt in every aspect of IJM's administration and vision.

The mandatory training week in Washington D.C. was very inspiring and educational. It definitely was a highlight of the internship. It allowed me to connect with field interns and headquarter interns from around the world. IJM receives 1500 applications from law school across the U.S.A. and Canada. Unfortunately there are only 15 picked each term. The placements are designed to last for 10 weeks either in Washington D.C. or in an international field office.

There are four offices currently operating in Africa, Rwanda, Zambia, Uganda and Kenya. Africa's field offices are busy with resolving property grabbing issues for widows and orphans. They also help investigate and prosecute sexual violence cases. The systemic changes are amplified by the prosecution of perpetrators and educational seminars taught to community leaders.

Each field office is driven by the injustices in their communities. South East Asia primarily deals with child sex slave trafficking cases. IJM investigates the crimes, brings evidence to local authorities and then offers after care for victims. Central Asia is still confronted with slavery issues. Central and South American offices help combat police corruption, missing persons and sexual violence.

It is important to get the process started early, perhaps before the Social Justice Fellows are selected. The internship selection for IJM takes months and the application process is very intense with many interviews. The Canadian IJM office is very helpful but the ultimate decision will be made in Washington D.C. I highly recommend IJM either as an internship possibility or as a charity to volunteer your time with.

More information about IJM can be found at www.ijm.org or there are many video clips available on "You Tube". Also read Gary Haugen's book "The Good News About Injustice" is a must read.