As for his work, Yoder switches off and on between teaching here at EMU and going abroad to work with poverty-stricken countries, trying to do his share to boost the economy. When asked what made him choose economics as a career, he replied, "Well, I kind of slid into it." In the early 1970s, he went with a team from Mennonite Central Committee to Jordan and Afghanistan. It was there that the extreme need of the Afghan people struck him. He said that, like teaching, he believed that his profession had to be a personal calling. At that time, Afghanistan was the poorest country in the world.

This past summer he returned to that country, only to see the results of poverty that had been increasing ever since his visit 30 years earlier. He and a firm in Boston had been given 10 million dollars to spend in one year to rebuild the health care system of Afghanistan. Their goal was to make healthcare services more accessible, more affordable, and to make the system more sustainable. Yes, this was a massive task, and the everyday poverty was very depressing. However, Yoder said, "I was reminded of the ugliness of war, but I was struck by a renewed sense of hope." His eyes especially lit up with the memory of one particular symbol of this hope – trees. "The people there plant trees," he explained. "And you don’t plant trees for yourself, you plant them for you children and their children to enjoy." Both the warm feeling of changing someone’s life for the better and the image of sickly, war-torn people have given Yoder just what he wants to teach his students with: experience. He was proud to say, "I don’t just teach out of the textbook; I bring experience to the classroom.”

His work enables him to do a lot of traveling. "I can tell you my favorite part of the world," he said. "It’s an area in the north most part of Pakistan called Hunzaland. Life is a mystery there. It’s harsh, it’s difficult, but it’s a mystery." And like every good traveler, he takes an avid interest in foreign music. Handel and Mozart are two of his favorite classical composers, but he really loves it when South African drums are mixed with traditionally classical pieces.

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