

**A BIBLICAL  
APPROACH TO  
SOCIAL  
TRANSFORMATION**

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## PART II

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## INTRODUCTION FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

### Description

This course, "A Biblical Approach to Social Transformation," provides an overview of the guidance the Bible gives for engagement in ministries of service and justice. From the creation narratives of Genesis which give a glimpse of God's original intention for the world and human society, through the exodus, the empire, and the exile, Hebrew history is traced until the Israelites are finally back in Jerusalem, dreaming of the Messiah's rule.

In these studies, through which key chapters in the story of God's people are examined, much is omitted. There is no mention of the patriarchs, or other heroes of the Old Testament like Samson, Esther, Daniel, Elijah, or Elisha. The structure is chronological and deals with the main points of the Old Testament story in relation to issues of transformation.

A chronological format is also adopted for presentation of material on the New Testament, beginning with the life and teaching of Jesus, examining the ministry of the early Church, and concluding with the apostolic vision of the future. Here issues are raised more specifically by the text rather than by reflecting on personal experience through understanding another people's history, as with the Old Testament material. There are ten studies from each Testament for reasons of symmetry and comprehensiveness. The course is contextualized in India and Bangladesh where the author has been involved with Christian development agencies in pastoral, administrative, and teaching roles. If it is used in other contexts, and even elsewhere within the Indian sub-continent, it should be illustrated with other local examples and issues. Field trips to villages, development projects and government offices will greatly enhance the impact of the course.

Other similar courses are available in India from TAFTEE, 13 Hutchins Road, Bangalore, 560-005. One, entitled "Poverty and Development" explores the principles of community development. Another "Health for All". Looks at community health from a Christian perspective. Both of these are written in a programmed learning format. This course does not strictly follow such a pattern; it is designed for classroom use rather than for individual home study because much can be learned by sharing experiences and classroom interaction. Questions designed to encourage reflection and discussion are frequently included throughout the text. These can be done before, during, or after class according to the tutor's objectives and teaching style. AT the same time, a brief yet full text is provided so that teacher and student have a full record of the lesson.

### Completing the course in Two Weeks

#### WEEK ONE:

Monday	am.	Introduction to the course. Lesson 1: Creation Discussion, exercises.
	pm.	Lesson 2: The Exodus and Liberation Today Case Study: East of Eden
Tuesday	am.	Lesson 3: The Structural Model Guest Lecture (to be arranged locally)

		Topic: "Law and Justice in Our Society"
	pm	Lesson 4: The Equality Model
Wednesday	am	A Visit to, or discussion of, cooperatives. Lesson 5: The Bureaucratic Model
		Exercise: Designing a questionnaire to find out how funds have been spent in a development project.
	pm	Lesson 6: The Justice Question
Thursday	am	Case Study: The Rag Pickers
		Visit to a development project
	pm	" " " " "
Friday	am	Lesson 7: The Wisdom Literature
		opinion Survey: Causes of Poverty
	pm	Lesson 8: The Issue of Culture
		Library search for stories of origins and significant events of history explaining local beliefs and customs
Saturday	am	Lesson 9: The Reconstruction Model
		Listing of local relief and development agencies
	pm	Lesson 10: The Messianic Vision

## WEEK TWO

Monday	am	Lesson 11: The Incarnation Approach
		Local examples of selfless service; identification and writing of brief files
	pm	Lesson 12: The Kingdom Model
Tuesday	am	Lesson 13: The Discipleship Model
		Evaluation of Training programs in the light of methods of Jesus and Paul.
	pm	Lesson 14: The Sharing Model
		Case Study: EFICOR – Evangelism and social action
Wednesday	am	Lesson 15: The Democratic Model
	pm	Visit to a slum. Research on the history and socio-economic structure of the slum community.
Thursday	am	Lesson 16: The Servanthood Pattern of Leadership
		Review of functional education materials and of Bible Society "New Reader" Scriptures
	pm	Lesson 17: The Strategy of Mission
		A Case Study: "Divya Shanti"
Friday	am	Lesson 18: The Holistic Approach
		Guest Lecture (to be arranged with local pastor)
		Topic: "My church's involvement in evangelism and social action."
	pm	Lesson 19: The Ecclesiastical Question
Saturday	am	Lesson 20: The Eschatological Vision
	pm	Conclusion

### Alternative Patterns for Studying the Course

The course can be spread out over a longer period of time so that field visits to the slums or development projects may last several days. It can also be studied in conjunction with the TAFTEE courses mentioned in the introduction to this section. If the course is being conducted in a city many additional resources, places to visit, experienced people, etc., may

be available. What is incorporated into the learning experience will depend on the initiative of the convener, responding to the objectives and interests of the participants. It would be unwise to do the course in less than two weeks as that would mean superficial treatment of the various themes. A schedule that fits the local context should be the norm. Students should be encouraged to read the Bible passages related to each lesson and any relevant books available.

### Guidelines for Course Leadership

This course raises many complex questions in relation to faith and society. It is important to face these as they are raised, but also to move on so that all material can be studied. The leader is responsible to keep the sessions moving.

This course is provided to facilitate exploration of the critical topic of Social Transformation and to see what the Bible says about it. Participants as well as the course leader should have all the materials in order to encourage group exploration of issues, not just lecture-style teaching. Group leaders should seek to generate an atmosphere of open, frank discussion which is only possible if leaders and participants remember that in the face of these significant questions, all are pilgrims and learners.

Remember too, to surround each day with prayer that the sovereign Lord God who created the world and who cares for all of its inhabitants may reveal His mind to each of the participants as they seek to serve Him in a hurting world.

# TRANSFORMATION: THE FOUNDATION OF CREATION

## STUDY 1: GOD'S INTENTION FOR THE WORLD

### Introduction

The story of creation gives the picture of God's original intent for human life and for the world. History and experience show that the world is far from ideal and that humankind is less than perfect. The fall has altered the dynamics and limited the potential of human life. Yet the original picture of the ideal world is included in the Bible for the purpose of instruction, and, since the beginning of time, there has been in the human heart a longing to recover the completeness of the unspoiled creation.

Creation is the logical starting point for this study series. Yet this particular study is different, for it predates the entry of sin into the world and therefore is the only one in the series where "transformation" does not strictly apply. From the time of the fall to the future consummation of the Kingdom of God, all revelation history reflects on how God has helped people struggle to recapture the destiny God originally intended and grasp the future He has planned. In a broken world then, there is a looking back to what was and a looking forwards in hope to what will be. This study looks back to the very beginnings of human life and history.

There are three relationships described in Genesis which need considerations:

- a). The relationship between people and God
- b). The relationship between individuals and society
- c). The relationship between humans and the world

Each has implications for involvement in social transformation today. Certain fundamental principles will emerge from the study of these relationships.

### People and God

The relationship between humans and God described in Genesis can be stated in four basic ways.

1). People are God's Creation. Between Genesis and science this is the real point of disagreement. Science does not dispute the order of creation describe in Genesis. Rather it endorses the biblical sequence:

1. light and darkness;
2. sea and sky;
3. sea, land and plants;
4. sun, moon and stars;
5. fish and birds
6. animals and humans.

There may be disputes about the time scale but the Bible is far from dogmatic on that point. The days could range from 24 hours, through a thousand years, to epochs of time. But evolution and creation do not agree on the origins of life. For the Bible, God is the author of life. For evolution, change is the causative principle, after which natural selection is believed to be an adequate explanation for all the shapes and forms of the plant and animal kingdoms.

The bible asserts that God made human beings. This is the first basic truth of the Christian faith. The Apostles' creed begins, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth."

The implications are

1. That people do not exist independently of God.
2. That God is interested in, and concerned for, human life and welfare.

2). Humans are God's Best Creation. People are distinguished from the rest of creation in three ways in the Genesis record. First, with all the rest of creation God declared Himself satisfied, saying "It is good." With human life He was very pleased, saying "It is very good." Only upon men and women is the superlative benediction given. It is interesting to note that the only point at which God expressed dissatisfaction with what He had made was when He said, "It is not good for man to be alone" (Gen. 2:18). Men and women together are God's best creation. The second distinction of humans from the rest of creation is that only humans bear God's image. This point is made repeatedly and forcefully in Genesis 1:26-27: "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness..." "So God created man in His own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female He created them." No other created is related to God so intimately.

The third distinguishing factor is that only people were given authority over the world. Both the fish and the birds and humans are blessed by God and told to, "be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth" (Gen. 1:22, 28). But of humans He also said "subdue the earth and rule over fish, birds, and animals" (Gen. 1:26, 28).

The implications are twofold:

1. Men and women have a special place in creation; therefore people come before things
2. The Bible does not permit worship of animals because they are below humans not above them.

3). People Can Commune with God. In Genesis 1 God speaks to men and women giving them instructions about how to manage the world. In Genesis 2 He introduces them to the delights and limits of the Garden of Eden. In Genesis 3 God comes to the Garden and seeks communion with Adam and Eve. God is in regular conversation with His special people, He wants to be with them and talk with them. Today God speaks to people in a variety of ways; through the Bible, conscience and visions. People speak to Him through prayer.

The implications are:

1. We should cultivate the practice of regular communion with God.
2. We should pray particularly about our management responsibilities in the world.

4). Men and Women Are Responsible to God. Humankind's responsibility arises firstly from the fact that God gave life, secondly that God gives instructions to follow and thirdly that God makes people responsible for their actions. God did not give Adam and Eve complete freedom to do whatever they liked, nor did He ignore their actions. He wanted to know why they had done and why. They were accountable and had to bear the consequences of their sin. They could not hide from God for He sought them out and the trees of Eden could not conceal them or their actions.

Some implications are:



1. We need to know and follow god's instructions.
2. When we fail we need to confess our faults and seek divine forgiveness and restoration

### Individuals and Society

God's intent for human relationships can be summed up in three key words: equality, harmony and community.

1). Equality is expressed by men and women both equally bearing the image of God, both being blessed, and both being instructed to rule the earth in Genesis 1. In genesis 2, Eve is one with Adam for she is "bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh." One of the most pervasive inequalities in the world has always been between men and women. Yet as one commentator states, "When God made women he did not take a bone from his head lest she be over him, nor a bone from his foot lest she be under him, but a bone from his side that she might be alongside him" (Source unknown).

If weakness is measured, it is the man who needs a woman and it is the man whom God first asks for an explanation of his sin and guilt. Rev. E. Stanley Jones tells of the dramatic impact of this truth:

I was speaking to a large crowd of men in an Indian Village when I saw a woman making her way through the crowd. I wondered what she was doing in that crowd of men at night when no women were supposed to be there. Before I knew what was happening she was showering flowers on my interpreter and me. It suddenly dawned on me what it meant. She had heard my notes in our message that meant hope of liberty and opening of doors for her. I took one of the flowers. I have it still. I hold it as a challenge to present this Gospel till all shall know the equality and freedom it offers.

Implications:

1. Beliefs and practices which make some people second class citizens are unbiblical.
2. Caste has no sanction in the Bible

Applications:

1. Start educational programs focusing on the biblical teaching about equality.
2. Bring equality of opportunity to society by ensuring the poorest and weakest are the major beneficiaries of development programs.
3. Stress the obligation of the rich to help the poor so that none will suffer or be poor (Deut. 15).
4. Recognize that human suffering hurts God (Mt. 25).
5. Model equality between men and women in the leadership of church and development agencies

2). Harmony. In popular literature and songs there has always been a longing to "get back to the Garden" because there life was simple and peaceful. In the Indian subcontinent since independence there has never been more disharmony than in the 1980's. From the far north where the army has battled with Sikh militants to the far south where the Tamils are fleeing Sri Lanka because of murder and looting, India is being torn apart by communalism. Language movements, growing in nearly every state and becoming political weapons, threaten the unity and viability of the nation.

Genesis 1 and 2 present a picture of an ordered universe of peaceful co-existence in the animal kingdom and a profound unity in human society (Gen. 2:25). After the fall the opposite is true as predators and murderers begin to dominate, truth is submerged, evil conquers good.

Implications:

1. Harmony and unity (John 17) are God's hope for society.
2. In the human ecosystem all are inter-related. My actions always affect others.

Applications:

1. Seek to find and maximize the points of agreement between staff.
2. All development work should arise out of a community consensus.
3. Peacemaking should be pursued as a priority program.

3). Community. The promises to Adam and Eve to be fruitful and multiply to the extent that their descendants should fill the earth were repeated to Abraham and Sarah whose children and grandchildren were to be "as numerous as the sand on the seashore" and a "blessing to all nations." God's plan from the beginning was to form an inclusive community. Throughout biblical history this vision has focused on a universal brotherhood, a chosen nation, the remnant, and the church. The human tendency is to limit relationships and responsibility. An individual's concerns center around self, one's family, and one's people. Men and women follow only at a distance the God who "loved the world and gave Himself for it" (John 3:16).

Implications:

1. The good of the community is a higher principle than individual wants or needs.
2. In the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10) Jesus stressed that neighborliness extends beyond family and racial boundaries and takes precedence over religious duties and commercial interests.

Applications

1. Programs which benefit only one family or group and therefore deny the principle of community should not be supported financially. Biblical patterning would encourage a shift of concern from self, to family, to community.
2. Community is a more biblical concept than communalism. Building bridges of understanding between ethnic groups is a Kingdom activity. It accords with God's creation intent.

Take one of the applications in each of the above sections and: (a) state how this is being practiced in a program or church you know of, and/or (b) state the steps necessary to act on the principles, and/or (c) describe the difference that applying these principles might make.

### People and the World

This final section of the creation model looks at five ways in which people are related to the world around them.

1). Humans are Part of the World. While the creation of human beings represents the climax of God's creative activity people are only one part of that creation. Continuing human life on this planet depends on humankind's collective recognition that they depend on the other parts of creation for their survival, and that they are part of an interdependent system. While human greed has always threatened to upset the balance, only in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century

has man really had the capacity to destroy the environment? Diplomat Adlai Stevenson described the relationship in these words: "We travel together, passengers on a little spaceship, dependent on its vulnerable supplies of air and soil...preserved from annihilation only by the care, the work...and the love we give our fragile craft." In Asia pressure of population means people have become a dominating and destructive presence in the world.

In most religions men become venerated as gods and in many countries rulers claim absolute power. According to the Bible where does man fit in relationships to God and the world?

2). Humans Shape the World. In the creation process God involved Adam and Eve in naming the animals (Gen. 2:19-20), working the soil, and tending the garden (Gen. 2:15). All of creation was placed under their direction with maximum freedom to develop it. Human energy and creativity have since shaped the earth in an infinite variety of ways. Some of these are positive, others negative. In fact it seems that many of the beneficial discoveries of science are capable of both good and evil applications; for example, nuclear medicine and nuclear weapons.

What are the most beneficial and most destructive forces shaping the life of your community?

3). Humans Use the World. The freedom given by God (Gen. 2:15) and the mandate extended to humans gave extremely wide powers over the world. Only the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was forbidden (Gen 2:17). In disobeying God, Adam and Eve chose evil, and ever since the danger and tendency has been for their descendants to misuse the resources of the world in damaging and exploitative ways.

What resource in your neighborhood or country has or may become exhausted because of overuse? What steps have been taken to remedy this abuse of the environment?

4). People are Stewards of the World. The mandate of Gen. 1:28 to "fill the earth and subdue it" (NIV) or "bring it under your control" (GNB) can also be translated "replenish" or "renew." Recent scholarship has preferred these latter translations not just for syntactical reasons but because this emphasis fits with the rest of scripture. Humans were intended to be not only users and consumers but also stewards and preservers of the earth. The transformation process seeks to effect a change in attitude and practice so that people become stewards and not just consumers of the resources of the good earth. IT is interest to note how often the principal actors in the parables of Jesus were stewards rather than consumers or owners. T.S. Elliot observed: "A wrong attitude toward nature implies, somewhere, a wrong attitude towards God, and the consequence is inevitable doom."

Is there a conflict between consumers and stewards? Give an example.

5). Humans are responsible to God for the world. As noted earlier, people are responsible to God; they are accountable. But, they are accountable to God not only for themselves and for others in need, but also for the world. God is the world's true owner. Genesis and Psalms, the Prophets and the parables all make this point. Humans are vice regents, rulers under god. IN history humans are responsible for their use of the world's resources. In eternity they will be judged according to the way they have exercised that authority.

Many people do not recognize they are accountable to God: what other authorities regulate

human actions?

Applications:

1. If the temperature rise in the subtropical countries has a man-made rather than a natural cause and deforestation is a major factor, then reforestation should be a priority program for governments and development agencies.
2. Land ownership patterns vary from individual ownership with absolute rights to state ownership. Between are families, cooperatives, communities, tribal groups, and multinationals. Research is needed to determine which pattern best promotes stewardship.
3. For countries and cities with a high population density the environment can easily become a casualty. Singapore however is the cleanest city in the world because of legislation to punish polluters. What controls are applied and applicable in your society?
4. A relationship to the land is part of many peoples' understanding of themselves. This is part of the image of God in them. For the landless and many city dwellers this relationship is broken. Suggest rural and urban alternatives which might affirm human dignity.
5. To be a steward requires some responsibility. Note steps that can be taken in organizations and in the community to encourage responsibility.
6. Explain the statement "No responsibility without accountability." State how it applies and give reasons why the reverse statement, "No accountability without responsibility," might also be true. Discuss these applications in small groups then share your ideas with others.

### Creation and Development

This course on "A Biblical Approach to Social Transformation" will look at many issues and aspects of development. Here, that process begins by looking at ten definitions which have been offered. Read these carefully and in the light of this study on the biblical teaching about creation rite the best definition of development you can, individually and as a group. Use a separate sheet of paper and keep your definition to add to and to improve later.

1. Rural development is improving the living standards of the low income populations residing in rural areas, and making the process of their development self-sustaining.
2. Development is freeing people from limitations
3. Development is facilitating processes and capabilities within and among people whereby they will act on their own needs and progress toward a state of wholeness in which they live in increasing harmony with every dimension of their environment.
4. Development is the process by which people gain greater control over themselves, their environment and their future in order to realize the full potential of human life that God has made possible.
5. Community development is the process of helping to strengthen a community and its leadership so that it can resolve, through its own initiative, the problems which face it.
6. Community development is the process whereby a community and its leaders are strengthened through the expansion of awareness of interaction, and of resources so that they can creatively resolve the problems which face them and achieve their goals through their own initiative.
7. Development is part of a humanization process intended to equip individuals to better deal with their world, ending exploitative social relationships, providing equal access to the productive resources of a society, returning the focus of decision making to people themselves and creating a situation in which the benefits of socio-economic transformation are available to all.

8. Development is the process by which both persons and societies come to realize the full potential of human life in a context of social justice with emphasis on self-reliance, economic growth being seen as one of the means for carrying forward this process.

9. Development is the process by which both persons and societies come to realize the full potential of human life in a context of social justice with emphasis on self-reliance, economic growth being seen as one of the means for carrying forward this process.

10. Development covers a complex series of inter-related change processes by which a social system, with optimal regard for the wishes of individuals and sub-systemic components of that system, move away from patterns of life widely perceived as unsatisfactory and less human, toward alternative patterns perceived as more satisfactory and more human. These changes may be gradual or abrupt, but some degree of calculation must be present on the part of society's influential decision makers regarding optimum speeds at which change ought to proceed and minimal costs to be paid, because how development is gained is not less important than what benefits are obtained at the end of the development road.

### Ecological Commandments

In Koinonia's brochure on the environment, ten ecological commandments are quoted to describe a Christian philosophy of concern for God's world.

1. I am the Lord thy God who has created Heaven and Earth. Know that thou art my partner in creation. Therefore, take care of the environment – the air, water, earth and the trees thereon, the birds, fish and the beasts
2. Know that in giving thee life I have given the freedom to use the natural resources in a limited and responsible manner.
3. Steal not from the future for it is thy children's.
4. Teach thy children, by thy example, a love for Nature.
5. Remember that technology, even in its most advanced stage, cannot recreate life that has been destroyed.
6. Campaign against destruction to thy environment by setting up pressure groups within thy community. Support and cooperate with the Central Environmental Authority and its Regional Units.
7. Recycle and re-use waste items and patronize products which are ecologically superior.
8. Make ecology, environmentally-sound development and conservation an everyday topic of conversation.
9. Set aside time in thy weekly day of rest to be with thy environment rather than use thy environment.
10. Remember that thou are not the owner of this Good earth but merely its Guardian, its Custodian, its Trustee. (S.J. Peiris, "In Harmony with Creation")

Discuss these in relation to the philosophy of a development organization you know, or in relation to your church policy. Individually or as a group prepare a sermon to preach on creation.

### Amazing Animals

While human beings have more intelligence than any other creature in the world it is good to realize that people are only part of God's marvelous creation. One writer has imagined how

animals might perform in the Olympic Games.

What Olympian broad jumper, for instance, could equal the performance of the lowly flea? It can leap 13 inches in a single bound – about 350 times its own length! For a person six feet tall, such a jump would approximate 2,000 feet. No human being has ever jumped 30 feet.

The kangaroo is an incredibly high jumper. Weighing about two hundred pounds, it can thrust its heavy body into the air and clear a hurdle nine feet high.

Human weight lifters take a back seat to the ant. The tiny insect can lift a burden 50 times its own weight.

The camel is the endurance champion. Although it is slow moving, it can walk 30 miles a day carrying a load that weighs half a ton.

The ostrich is the track champion. It carries its 300 pound body at 30 miles an hour.

What swimmer could compete with the gentle penguin? It is reported to swim at the rate of 22 miles per hour.

The elephant's trunk which can act as a bulldozer or pick up a pin contains 30,000 muscles – about 70 times the number of muscles in our bodies.

Then there's the mighty midge! The tiny, agile insect can beat its wings 133,000 times a minute – about 100 times faster than a human eye can blink.

# TRANSFORMATION: THE EXODUS EVENT

## STUDY 2: LIBERTATION THEN AND NOW

### Introduction

The Exodus is the great salvation event of the Old Testament and one of the most dramatic events of human history. Lesslie Newbigin describes its importance and relevance in these words:

In the Old Testament the primary model of salvation is provided by the exodus from Egypt. Indeed, this is much more than a model: it is God's supreme saving action. God's revelation of Himself to Moses is in the form of a call to go and liberate captive Israel. God makes Himself known as the liberator God. God's cause and the cause of those exploited immigrant workers are the same. The exodus from Egypt and the deliverance from Pharaoh's pursuing army are not described in the record as signs or even as illustrations of God's saving work. Instead, there is a simple identification: this deliverance is God's salvation (Exodus 14:13, 15:2)

Yahweh is forever afterwards identified as the one 'who brought you up out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.' (1978, p. 108)

This study examines the Exodus event and through that, encourages reflection on the issues of oppression and liberation today. The Exodus can be divided into four phases – the conditions, God's concern, Moses' call, and the cost.

Read Exodus chapters 1-14 to review the sequence and significance of the event.

### The Conditions

The conditions in Egypt about 1290 B.C. Were extremely harsh for the enslaved Hebrews. They suffered in several ways.

1). A Whole Nation Was Kept in Slavery. The Egyptians had clearly developed a strong racial prejudice against the Hebrew people. Their ethnic discrimination took many humiliating and hurtful forms. It was an extreme example of apartheid. The Hebrews, through Joseph, had brought salvation to Egypt and her neighbors many generations before. Now they were slaves with no rights or liberties. As the years passed and the twin cities of Python and Ramses rose above the desert sands increasing numbers of Hebrews were buried beneath them.

2). They Were Oppressed by Hard Labor. Stories of the working conditions for prisoners in Hitler's concentration camps or in Russian Siberia are foreshadowed in this ancient story, as are the experiences of some bonded laborers in India today. Men, women, and children all worked in the torrid north African heat (1:8-14). When Moses appealed to Pharaoh to release the Hebrews, their labor, already ruthlessly oppressive, was increased.

3). They Were Mercilessly Beaten. The cruelty to which Moses reacted (2:11) was one of countless such incidents. "In all their hard labor the Egyptians used them ruthlessly" (1:14).

“The Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out” (1:23). “Moses watched them at their hard labor. He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew” (1:11). The Israelites had no rights of freedom, wages for work, or appeal against brutality.

Finally, Pharaoh instructed his people to throw all Hebrew male babies into the river. But this also failed in the case of Moses (2:1-10). While many babies were saved with God's help, thousands of babies and adult laborers must have died.

### Contemporary Parallels

Describe a situation which is similar to the conditions under which the Hebrews were forced to live.

From magazines and newspapers, research the plight of another group of oppressed people. This project could be spread over one or two weeks. Articles should be cut out and pasted on paper and illustrated. Underline important points and add comments.

### God's Covenant

As in the creation story the central figure in the drama of Exodus is God. Is He who takes the initiative to rescue the people from slavery? This story reveals God's character and concerns which led to actions on behalf of the oppressed.

1). God is Responsive to Human Suffering. Moses who had once burned with indignation at the injustice handed out to the Hebrew people by their cruel taskmasters had settled down in rural Midian and was quite happy to forget the plight of his brothers. But God did not forget them. At the burning bush, He said to Moses “I have seen...I have heard...I am concerned...” (3:7) – complete this verse. “The cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them.” The language used is anthropomorphic (speaking of God in human terms) but His seeing, hearing, and concern for people who are hurting is graphically expressed.

2). God is Opposed to Unjust Laws. When the Hebrew midwives were told to kill the male babies they refused. What reason is given for their refusal? See verse 1:17. They knew God, the creator of life and author of justice, would not approve of such action.

Moses' parents too, disobeyed the law to drown all male babies. No doubt many of their neighbors and friends were aware of their civil disobedience. Yet God blessed both for their opposition to Pharaoh's decrees. The midwives were blessed with children and Moses' mother was paid for nursing her own son after his rescue by Pharaoh's daughter.

Quote an example of a law you know about which should be disobeyed. Does this contradict Romans 13 where it says leaders are ordained by God and are to be obeyed? Yes or no? Why or why not? See also Revelation 13 where the ruling power is evil.

3). God Delivers From Oppression. When Exodus declares that God has seen the problems and heard the cry of the oppressed Hebrews it continues, “So I have come down to the rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians...” (1:8).



When Dr. Martin Luther King was in court appealing against racial discrimination in the United States in the early 1960's, a Supreme Court decision was handed to the magistrate who announced to the court that bus segregation was illegal. A black man, stood up and shouted, "God Almighty has spoken from Washington D.C.C.!" There was no doubt in his mind that God had rescued them! IN the celebration that followed huge crowds of blacks sang, "Free at last, free at last! Praise God Almighty, we are free at last!"

When the Israelites heard God was going to deliver them what do you think their reaction was?

4) God Prepared His Servant to Share in the Work of Liberation. Moses' preparation consisted of 40 years training in the palace followed by 40 years of living in the wilderness. The first period prepared him to confront Pharaoh while the second gave him the skills and knowledge to enable people to survive in the inhospitable desert where water, food, and protection would be in short supply.

Mohammed once said "He will never be a prophet who has not first been a herdsman." Unknown to Moses and despite feeling unworthy, God had been preparing him throughout his life for the task of liberation.

The contrast in Moses' life experience between the first 40 years when he was a prince, favored, educated, rich, powerful, and well fed and the 40 years when he was in the wilderness surviving as a shepherd and struggling against the elements, is illuminating. It means God may be using the experiences of a good home, education, wealth, and influence to enable men and women today to liberate the poor. He may also use such experiences as being an orphan, living in a poor village far away from the city, being poor and having to struggle as necessary preparation to help uplift the poor. Moses had both backgrounds.

In your life what experience so far has best prepared you to understand and help the poor?

### Moses' Call

The call of Moses is recorded in Exodus 3:10-4:17 (Figure 2:1). It is a dialogue between God and Moses with four cycles of command, excuse, and promise. Fill in the verses in Figure 2.1.

If God had not called Moses at the burning bush he would no doubt have spent the rest of his life happily raising sheep and children. He certainly did not volunteer to liberate the poor. IS a call from God a necessary starting point for such work today? What different might having a sense of call make?

### The Cost

In the Exodus drama the stakes were very high. Everyone had to pay a cost to change the tyranny of a generation of racial discrimination and oppression. Many lives were lost. This section examines the dynamics of this in relation to the major groups involved.

1). The Cost to the Prophet. A prophet of the 20th Century Dietrich Bonhoeffer, theologian and pastor of the Confessing Church in Germany at the time of the Second World War, wrote

a book called The Cost of Discipleship about the hard decisions a Christian must make in the face of injustice. Bonhoeffer's discipleship led him to speak out against Hitler, to join an aborted assassination attempt on Hitler's life, to minister to fellow prisoners of war, and six days before Flossenburg concentration camp was liberated, to lose his life. Bonhoeffer chose the way of the cross and of conscience rather than the path of 'cheap grace' that is, accepting salvation from God but doing nothing to achieve salvation for others.

Moses too had to take the difficult road. He was often, as modern Jews say, "Between a rock and a hard place." For him the cost of obedience and involvement in God's liberating work included:

1. Giving up his quiet country life.
2. Taking Risks.
3. Accepting enormous responsibilities
4. Leading extremely tough negotiations.
5. Trusting God completely
6. Winning and keeping the confidence of the people

Note verses from the reading in Exodus chapters 3-14 to support these points. If you were the pastor of a church and became aware of and concerned for a group of exploited people, what advice do you think the following people might give you? Your fellow pastors, your congregation, your family, the exploiters, the oppressed group, and God. Within the church, opposite decisions may be made! Consider the following examples.

#### Case 1: The Church in South Korea

During the struggle of the Korean war in the early 1950's and in the reconstruction of a devastated country immediately after, the church became the voice expressing the hopes of the people. It was totally involved with the poor in the struggle to survive and build a better future. The poor saw the church as their advocate and friend and joined in vast numbers.

#### Case 2: The Reformed Church in South Africa

With a few exceptions the church and clergy have endorsed the legitimacy and actions of the minority Afrikaans government in its suppression of the majority black population. Blacks have formed their own churches but have not been allowed to join the white churches. The church is an instrument of oppression rather than of liberation.

Why do you think these two churches have adopted such different attitudes and actions?

2). The Cost to the Poor. The poor also had to face a struggle and cost. Liberty is never cheap or easy! For them to achieve freedom from their oppressors they had to:

- Overcome their defeatist attitude.
- Work harder during the freedom struggle.
- Exercise faith and perseverance
- Face danger.

The following quotations illustrate these points. Write 1, 2, 3, or 4 after each verse to indicate which of the above categories it belongs in:

Exodus 5:4 "The king of Egypt said, 'Moses and Aaron, why are you taking the people away

from their labor? Get back to work.” ( )

Exodus 5:6-8 ”He gave this order to the slave drivers and foremen in charge of the people. ”You are no longer to supply the people with straw for making bricks; let them go and gather their own straw. But require them to make the same number of bricks as before; don't reduce the quota.” ( )

Exodus 5:9 ”Make the work harder for the men so that they keep working.” ( )

Exodus 5:15 ”The Israelite foremen appointed by Pharaoh's slave drivers were beaten and asked, 'Why haven't you met your quota of bricks yesterday or today as before?'" ( )

Exodus 5:18 ”Get to work, you will not be given any straw, yet you must produce your quota of bricks.” ( )

Exodus 5:21 ”The Israelites said to Moses and Aaron, 'May the Lord look on you and judge you! You have made us a stench to Pharaoh and his servants and have put a sword in their hand to kill us.'” ( )

Exodus 6:6 ”Say to the Israelites: 'I am the Lord and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them and will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment.'”

Exodus 6:8 ”'I will bring you to the land...and give it to you as a possession.' ” ( )

Exodus 6:9 ”Moses reported to the Israelites but they did not believe him because of their discouragement and cruel bondage.” ( )

Exodus 8:25-26 ”Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said 'Go sacrifice to your God here in the land' But Moses said, 'That would not be right. The sacrifices we offer the Lord would be detestable to the Egyptians. And if we offer sacrifices that are detestable in their eyes, will they not stone us?' ” ( )

Exodus 14:10 ”As Pharaoh approached, the Israelites looked up and there were the Egyptians marching after them.” ( )

Exodus 14:12 ”'Didn't we say to you in Egypt leave us alone; it is better to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert!' ” ( )

Of the four barriers to liberation located within the poor themselves and mentioned in this section, which do you think is the most difficult to change? Which would you try to change first? What other costs for the poor might be involved in a modern liberation struggle?

1). The cost to Pharaoh and the Egyptians. In the prolonged liberation struggle Pharaoh too paid a cost. Losing the Hebrews meant:

- a) Losing cheap labor.
- b) Losing power.
- c) Losing money.
- d). Losing Egyptian lives.

Pharaoh made the decision to unconditionally release the Hebrews only when he had no other choice, when he was absolutely forced to do so, and when the cost of keeping them had become too great! Pharaoh suffered through ten plagues before he gave in and agreed to their release. His replies after each show his gradual facing of the inevitable fact that his slaves would not serve and obey him forever.

(Figure 2.2)

The Bible says Pharaoh released the Hebrews only after death had come to every Egyptian home. In the Bible, oppression is not limited to the cruelty of Pharaoh. Thomas Hanks in God So Loved the Third World says it is “a fundamental structural category of Biblical theology.”

He supports this claim with four pieces of evidence:

- a) There are 20 Hebrew words to describe oppression
- b) They are used 555 times in the Old Testament.
- c) They appear in many key passages (Exodus 1-5, Psalm 72, Isaiah 53, and Isaiah 58)
- d) Liberation from oppression is at the heart of Israel's creedal confession (Deut. 26:5- 9).

Use a bible dictionary or use the references above to discover how these words are used.

### Liberation Theology

Thomas Hanks also provides a succinct summary of liberation theology's common themes, perspectives, and structural elements:

1. Oppression as the fundamental cause of poverty.
  2. The poor as the primary focus of the church's praxis
  3. Class struggle, both as a socio-economic and ecclesiastical reality.
  4. Agape-love as a conflictive response.
  5. The paradigm of the Exodus as the original revolution
  6. Salvation biblically understood as integral liberation
  7. The socio-economic dimension of justice seen as implying democratization in the ownership and control of the means of production.
  8. Land as the fundamental biblical substratum (agrarian society) for human life and economic productivity.
  9. The wrath of God as the appropriate response of indignation against oppression and injustice (expressed in prophetic proclamation of judgment).
- (1983, p. 62)

There are now many books on liberation theology. Most come from Latin America where the majority are Christians but there is a large gap between the few rich and the many poor. These books are listed in the bibliography. From a library, choose one to read.

In your estimate what percentages of people in your country are:

Very rich (own many businesses, houses, etc.).

Rich (own their own house and have a good income).

Middle class (own some land or have a secure income).

Poor (own a marginal farm or earn just enough to buy food, clothes, etc.).

Very Poor (don't own any land or earn enough to live on).

### The Question of Violence

In Egypt many people died - Hebrew because of slavery, Egyptians in the process of liberation. Christians are divided on whether violence is ever an option. Before reading what others have said about this issue, respond to this question: on the basis of the Exodus event, who has the right to kill: the oppressor only, the oppressed, both, neither, only God, no one? Choose one and state the reasons why.

Here are some statements expressing different points of view. Discuss these as a group or

use them as data for a debate.

- a) Some liberation theologians see in Exodus only God's liberation of an oppressed people and miss the fact that God also acted to fulfill His promise to Abraham, to reveal His will and to call out a special people" (Sider, Unpublished paper, "Evangelical Theology of Liberation", p. 3-4).
- b) Liberation is a glorious biblical word. The Bible frequently speaks of liberty, freedom, and release: the year of release; the liberty of the sons of God; when the Lord liberates you, then you are truly free; the truth sets us free; God liberated the Hebrew slaves from bondage. In biblical thought, the human race is in bondage to sin and is liberated by belief in Jesus Christ. Paul was bound and in prison but he never exhorted his disciples to liberate him. Nor did he advise the Jews to throw off the Roman yoke. Paul lived in days when, among the Jews, liberating the homeland was the compelling national cause; but he never mentioned it. Neither did the Lord Jesus Christ. (Glasser & McGavran, 1983, p. 56)
- c) If the Exodus were to be used as a model rather than as a mere slogan, it would suggest withdrawal rather than change within the existing society. The Israelites did not change Egypt by remaining in Egypt. They left Egypt. Over against the paradigm of leaving Egypt and destroying Pharaoh on the way, we find in the old Testament, more often, another model of how to live under a pagan oppressor. It is the way of diaspora. This is the model taken over by the New Testament church and the model as well for two millennia of rabbinic Judaism. The form of liberation in the biblical witness is not the guerrilla campaign against an oppressor culminating in assassination and military defeat, but the creation of a confessing community which is viable without or against the force of the state. (Yoder, 1972, p. 101, 134)
- d) Liberation theology tells us that we are on the wrong side and that if we do not change sides, things will be very rough for us in the future. But we immediately realize that if we do change sides, things will be very rough for us in the present. (Brown, 1974, p.124)
- e) Let me remind you that liberation is about victims...Every family that is undernourished is a victim. Not only the unemployed, but every man and woman whose work is underpaid, irregular, or insecure are victims. And every child born of unions of such men and women are doubly victimized; for they do not only have to suffer malnutrition, disease, overcrowded living conditions or actual homelessness, desertion by parents or orphanhood, ignorance and talents stunted by starvation, but they also suffer the crippling effects of insecurity and the deprivation of love. Every person who has been denied equality, who has been treated with less than full regard, who has been maimed or killed because of race or religion, is a victim. (Michael Manley, Prime Minister of Jamaica, 1975)
- f) Before the suffering of our people, humbled and oppressed for centuries we feel called by the word of God to take up a position, a clear position on the side of the poor, a position taken in common with all those who commit themselves to the people for their true liberation. (Brazilian Bishops, 1973) (Neal, 1977, p. 27)
- g) God is a God who takes sides rather than remaining neutral and aloof; God sides with the poor, the dispossessed, the slaves, rather than with the Pharaohs, the powerful, the influential people in society. Those, therefore who are the poor and the dispossessed can be confident that the alleviation of their misery is one of God's concerns. God calls them to work with Him

in overcoming injustice. Since god is a living God, this means that what was true for Israelites back then can become true for their modern counterparts today, i.e. their liberation from oppressive structures.

Consequently, the story of the Exodus is a story of good news today, the good news that God is a liberating god. Religion and politics don't mix? On the contrary, they are mixed up all the way through the story. (Brown 1978, p. 88)

h) Marx believed that violent revolution is always necessary when wrestling power from those who control the resources of society since none give it up willingly. The violence occurs because of the exploitation prior to the day of accounting and the resistance to its correction. (Neal, 1977, p.106)

Figure 2.1

God's command

1. "Go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people out of Egypt" (3:10).
2. "When you have brought the people out of Egypt you will worship God on this mountain" (3:12).
3. (3:16)
- 4.

Moses' Excuse

1. "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" (3:11)
2. (3:13)
3. "What if they do not believe me or listen to me?" (4:1)
4. "O Lord, I have never been eloquent...I am slow of speech and tongue." (4:10).

God's Promise

1. "I will be with you" (3:12)
2. "I am who I am" - the living God. "The Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob" - the God of history. (3:14)
3. "I will show my power through you" (4:2-9)
4. (4:12)

Figure 2.2

The Plagues

Pharaoh's Response

- |                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| 1. Blood        | He took no notice. (7:23)   |
| 2. Frogs        | Pharaoh said, "Stop the plague tomorrow" (8:10)   |
| 3. Gnats        | He would not listen. (8:19)   |
| 4. Flies        | He would not let the people go. (8:23)  |
| 5. Livestock    | His heart was unyielding. (9:7)   |
| 6. Boils        | He would not listen to Moses. (9:12)  |
| 7. Hail         | "This time I have sinned. I will let you go; you don't have to stay any longer" (9:27-28)   |
| 8. Locusts      | "Go and worship the Lord, but only the men" (10:8, 11)  |
| 9. Darkness     | "Go and worship the Lord. Even your women and children may go with you; only leave your flocks and herds behind" (10:24)  |
| 10. Oldest Sons | During the night Pharaoh Summoned Moses and Aaron and said, 'Up, leave my people, you and the Israelites go worship the Lord as you have requested. Take your flocks and herds as you have said. And also bless me"' (12:31-32) |



## TRANSFORMATION: THE LEGISLATIVE MODEL STUDY 3: MAKING GOOD LAWS

### Introduction

The first five books of the Old Testament containing the accounts of creation, the story of the patriarchs, the exodus, and the wanderings in the wilderness are called the law or Torah in Hebrew. This is because these books contain the instructions God gave to the Hebrews to make their society just and distinctive. The laws are found mostly in four sections.

- a) The Ten Commandments (Ex. 20:1-7, Deut. 5:6-22) give the basic requirements God sets for His people.
- b) The Book of the Covenant (Ex. 21-23) includes instructions about justice and compassion for the poor.
- c) The Levitical Law (Leviticus) mostly contains instructions for the priests.
- d) The Deuteronomic Law (Deut. 12-26) contains the preaching of Moses on how to live to please God and help each other.

Read the bible passages listed in (a) and (b) above and parts of (c) and (d) to discover what kind of laws were given by god. As you read, list the main topics covered.

### The Setting for Biblical Law Giving

The heart of the Old Testament law is found in the Ten Commandments. This revelation was made to Moses after the movement out of Egypt and before the entry into the Promised Land. To understand the setting for this heart of the law it is important to note its connection with several events.

1) God's Covenant. The first reference to God's intent to rescue the Hebrews from Egypt notes that "God heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob" (Ex 2:24). The Biblical laws are not given arbitrarily by a demanding unfeeling God but are a result of His love and concern for His people. "So God looked on the Israelites and was concerned about them" (Ex. 2:25). God was true to His covenant promise. The laws He gave would define the obligations on the people's side and enable them to be faithful to Him and supportive of each other. The Deuteronomist reminds the Hebrew people that they are favored.

Write down Deuteronomy 4:8 (see also Deut. 7:7-9). In his introduction to the Ten Commandments Moses describes the law itself as part of God's covenant with His people.

2) The Exodus. In Egypt there were either two sets of laws, one for the Egyptians and one for the Hebrews, or, more likely, that law was simply not applied for the Hebrews' slaves. They had no rights but many obligations. The authority of the Egyptian overlords was absolute. In all societies there are laws relating to persons and laws relating to persons and laws relating to property. Where there is extreme oppression, people can be so devalued that they are less protected than property. God acted to rescue the Hebrews from such a situation, where their lives were considered so expendable, that they could be disposed of quickly at birth or lingeringly as their health and strength were sapped by endless labor and brutal beatings. The laws of God contrasted with the ethics of Egypt.

In your society who enjoys most of the protection and benefits of the law? Who enjoys the least? Why?

3) The Mountain. The setting for the call of Moses to return to Egypt to lead the people out of slavery and the revelation of the law to ensure a just society was the same: both occurred at Mount Horeb. The circumstances were also similar. On both occasions fire burned but failed to consume. Moses' attention was attracted by the bush that remained unharmed though flames engulfed it. Similarly when he ascended to receive the law, fire and cloud shrouded the mountain (see Deut. 4:32-40 and 5:23-27). The second similarly was that on Mount Horeb God spoke directly to His servant. This too was cause for amazement. On the first occasion Moses removed his shoes enabling his feet to touch the holy ground; on the second, his face glowed with the divine presence. There was no doubt in the people's minds about the origins of the laws. They saw the fire, heard the voice, and recognized that Moses had been with God.

4) The Promised Land. The law given in the wilderness looked forward to a time when the Israelites would be in a setting where they could be secure from exploitation and threat by others. At such a time the laws God gave them would help them not to harm each other but to create a strong, mutually supportive community. The next study looks at some of the socio-economic laws in detail. Here it should be noted that their purpose was to create and sustain a just society.

5) The Commitment. When the laws were first being given the people requested Moses to, "tell us whatever the Lord our God tells you. We will listen and obey" (Deut. 5:27). they echoed this promise many times: "We will do everything the Lord commands." But God says, "You rebelled against the command of the Lord your God. You did not trust Him or obey Him" (Deut. 23). The end of the Book of Judges comments, "Everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (21:25). In the wilderness and in the promised land the people fluctuated between the ideals of devotion to God and commitment to the community, and their individual selfish desires.

What historical circumstances helped shape the laws in your country? In what ways have religious beliefs influenced the law?

### Types of Old Testament Laws

The Mosaic laws can be divided into four broad categories:

1. Spiritual laws.
2. Social laws.
3. Health Laws
4. Ceremonial Laws

1) Spiritual Laws. In the summary of the commandments the first instruction is to "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength" (Deut. 6:51). In the Ten Commandments of Exodus 20, the first four have this focus. As God is unchanging in His nature and because man faces the same temptations and problems the Hebrews faced, these laws are still relevant today. God still wants people to know Him and to do His will. The commands about personal relationships with God tell how this can be done. They state:

a) God's supremacy - "No other gods before me."

- b) God's spirituality – No idolatry.
- c) God's authority – reverence for His name everywhere.
- d) God's pattern – Weekly rest and worship.

From God's side the following terms are used:

- 1. Chesed – steadfast love.
- 2. Rahmin – mercy.
- 3. Mishpat – justice.
- 4. Eminah – faithfulness.

How can people express each of these qualities?

2) Social Laws. These laws speak of how people should interact in society. “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Lev. 18:19). In the Ten Commandments the last six laws define what this meant. Again, these remain relevant because they deal with:

- e) Obligations to parents 0 honor father and mother
- f) Value of life – no murder.
- g) Sanctity of marriage – no adultery.
- h) Rights of private property – no stealing
- i) False testimony – no lying.
- j) Undisciplined desire – no coveting.

In the New Testament both categories of law are quoted together in Luke 10:25-37 where Jesus tells the story of the good Samaritan. In that story half of the basic laws about obligation to one's neighbor were broken.

Read the good Samaritan story and divide the actions into three categories: lawless, selfish, and caring.

3) Health Laws. The Bible also speaks of basic conditions of life in society. There are many laws regarding food to be eaten, clothing to be worn, and cleanliness around their houses. The theme and purpose of these laws was to maintain the physical health of the community. Basic sanitation (Deut. 23:12-13) and control of the infectious diseases (Lev. 13-14) are commanded.

4) Ceremonial Laws. These related primarily to the priests and Levites but also guided the people about how they should worship God. God gave instructions for building and using the tabernacle, and later for the temple (ex. 35-40; 1 Kings 5-8; Ezek. 40-43). Of all the laws of the Old Testament these are the least applicable today because in His death on the cross, Jesus ended the sacrificial system. Ritual and ceremony however, always play an important part in significant community events. God was interested not just in correct procedures but in systems and signs, rituals and regulations which would reflect His awesome yet loving character and help His people approach and relate to Him in enriching ways so they might experience His forgiveness and guidance rather than His discipline and judgment.

Into which categories would you put each of the following laws:

- a) Instructions regarding the cleansing of lepers.
- b) Instructions for the high priest on the Day of Atonement.
- c) The rights of slaves.
- d) Prohibition of intermarriage with other nations because of their idolatry.
- e) Covering of all sacred objects before moving them.
- f) Instructions to free slaves every seven years.

- g) Laws about what to bring and how to present thank offerings.
- h) Prohibition of eating fish without fins and scales.

### The Purpose of Old Testament Laws

Each of the types of laws – spiritual, social, health, and ceremonial – had a specific purpose. This section explores more fully the laws relating to relationships between people. Several purposes emerge for these laws about life in society.

1) To Restrain Evil and Protect the Innocent. The laws of Moses were quite clearly revolutionary in their time. Their wisdom and enduring value are proven by the fact that they are still the basis for legal systems and national constitutions. At the time they were promulgated they contrasted with the autocratic disregard for human life in Egypt where life was deliberately destroyed and with the rivalry of Canaan where petty kings were constantly at war and where the death of one of their people incited revenge against a whole community. In this setting “an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth” represented a significant limitation on the practice of personal revenge. The cities of refuge for innocent offenders (Deut. 4:41-43), strategically placed so that everyone had a chance of reaching safety, and the penalty for careless owners of a dangerous animal (Ex. 21:29-32) are merciful provisions for the safety of both individuals and the community.

For each of the Ten commandments where it says “Do not...” rewrite the command in a positive way.

2) To Create Good. While the Ten Commandments and the vast majority of Old Testament laws are stated in negative form as prohibitions, “Thou shalt nots,” some of the other commands are positive injunctions. For example, “You shall have just balances and weights” (Lev. 19:36); “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind” (Deut. 6:5)

No one changed negative into positive as dramatically as Jesus. Seven times in the Sermon on the Mount He quotes the Old Testament prohibitions then pronounces, “But I say unto you...be reconciled to your brother...make friends with your accuser...treat women honorably...be faithful to your wives...speak simply and honestly...accept persecution...love your enemies” (Mt. 5:21-48)

The restraining of evil and protecting of the innocent is intended to allow good to flourish and triumph in the struggle with evil. Can good be commanded?

3) To Provide a Model. The monotheistic religions of Christianity and Islam have each spread not only a belief system but a behavior code. This code expressed in law becomes the model of what a society should be like. Revived Islam is currently very consciously promoting the integration of society through application of the Muslim *Shariah* or law. During the western colonial period Christian ideals spread throughout the world and became the basis for law in many countries. In this introduction to the constitution of a modern nation, underline all the sections which seem to be based on the Bible.

In Humble Submission to Almighty God who controls the destinies of people and

nations, Who gathered our forebears together from many lands and gave them this their own, Who guided them from generation to generation, who has wondrously delivered them from the dangers that beset them, we declare that we:

Are conscious of our responsibility toward God and men, are convinced of the necessity of standing united and of pursuing the following national goals:

To uphold Christian values and civilized norms with recognition and protections of freedom of faith and worship.

To safeguard the integrity and freedom of our country.

To secure the maintenance of law and order.

To further the contentment and the spiritual and material welfare of all.

To respect and to protect the human dignity, life, liberty, and property of all in our midst.

### Muslim Law and Social Structure

The law of Islam, the *Shariah*, claims to be a complete guide for the life of individuals and societies. In Iran and Pakistan in the last decade the practice of *Shariah* has replaced a more westernized and Christian legal system. In the Indian subcontinent there are approximately 260 million Muslims (120 Million in India, 85 million in Bangladesh, and 55 million in Pakistan). The study of Muslim law is therefore very important because it governs the lives of so many and because it claims to be a complete social system.

There are, however, several sources, versions, and categories of Muslim laws which contribute to the debate on the nature of Muslim *Shariah*.

a) Sources of authority of Islamic law:

1. *Koran* – Holy book
2. *Hadith* - Traditions
3. *Ijma* -Consensus
4. *Qias* – Analogies

b) Schools of Islamic law (*Madhabs*)

1. *Hanafi* – India, Pakistan
2. *Maliki* – North Africa
3. *Shafi* – East Africa/Indonesia
4. *Hanbali* – Saudi Arabia

c) Categories of law:

1. *Wajib* – Compulsory
2. *Mandub* – Recommended
3. *Mabah* – Optional
4. \_\_\_\_\_ – Disapproved
5. *Harum* – Forbidden

The *Shariah* is regarded as, "the revelation of God to man, to order his affairs, guide his life, and give him an answer for every question of right and wrong" (Cooper, 1985, p. 111).

Interview some Muslim people and ask them how Islamic law shapes the life of their community. Record and discuss your findings.

Do you think the renewed emphasis in some countries on Muslim law is aiding social transformation? Why or why not?

### The Law Applied

Leviticus 19 contains many specific laws. In it the Ten Commandments are repeated in a different form and the law is related to various groups in the community. Finally there is an important section on the law and the neighbors

#### 1) The Ten Commandments

- |                                    |                             |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. No God but God (v. 31)          | 2. No idols (v. 4, 26)      |
| 3. No blasphemy (v. 12)            | 4. Worship (v. 3, 32)       |
| 5. Honor parents (v. 3)            | 6. Value life (v. 16)       |
| 7. Respect marriage (v. 20-22, 29) | 8. Protect property (v. 11) |
| 9. Truthfulness (v. 11)            | 10. No coveting (v. 13)     |

Read Leviticus chapter 19.

#### 2) The Law and the Community. Seven target groups are mentioned in this chapter

Target Groups:

- |                            |                                  |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Farmers (v. 9-10)       | Commanded Actions                |
| 2. Employers (v. 13)       | Pay wages promptly               |
| 3. The handicapped (v. 14) | Be shown respect                 |
| 4. Women (v. 20-22, 29)    | Use honest scales                |
| 5. The elderly (v. 32)     | Share food with the poor         |
| 6. Aliens (v. 34)          | Be treated equally               |
| 7. Traders (v. 35-36)      | Not to be taken advantage of     |
|                            | Be free from sexual exploitation |

Match these columns and check your answers by looking up the verses listed.

3) The Law and Neighbors. Leviticus 19 also contains the original declaration of the Golden Rule: "To love our neighbors as ourselves." This was well known by the expert in the law who came to Jesus and asked about neighborly duties (Luke 10:27). In Leviticus 19 the neighbor is protected in five ways. What are they? (see verses 13, 15-18). Compare your answers.

4) The Law Observed. 1 Samuel 12:3-5 is another part of what biblical scholars call the *Moral Apologia*. Briefly describe the sort of person Samuel was as recorded in this passage. Contrast him with his sons and with Saul (see 1 Sam. 8:3, 13:14).

### Law and Social Transformation

Case Study 1. In the small peaceful Pacific country of New Zealand two events of international importance took place in 1984. In one, violence was employed to oppose peace. In the other, the law was invoked to avoid violence. The first incident was the blowing up of the peace ship "Rainbow Warrior" by French government agents. One man was killed and

the United Nations General Secretary later ordered eight million dollars damages to be paid. In the second incident New Zealand's national football team was prevented from visiting South Africa because two lawyers successfully argued in the court that a tour would not be in the game's best interest. The tour was canceled.

In the face of social injustice there are always several options for action. Violence is one, nonviolent resistance is another, and changing the law is a third option. India's Gandhi is famous for combining the latter two and has been copied by other social reformers throughout the world. For example, Shahrir, the nationalist who worked constantly against violence in Indonesia's struggle for independence said of Gandhi, "This man was so sure, so pure, and so joyful because he knew that his end was pure and that his methods were morally right" (Verkuyl & Nordholt, 1974, p 53).

Gandhi's strength was that he mobilized the people to keep the laws and practices that were just and to change those that were unjust. In doing this he reshaped history.

Case Study 2. Gandhi's most famous follower was Dr. Martin Luther King, a black Christian leader in America. In "Responsible Revolution" his method is described as follows:

1. Direct action to dramatize an unjust situation. The situation was first well analyzed. King never used hysterical, inflated images, he never stooped to slander. The procedure was always the same: careful researching of the situation then dramatic demonstration to awaken public conscience.

2. Direct action after talks break down. He followed this rule he set for himself: One goes into direct action after talk has gone on as long as possible. We seek to win our opponents to our cause. We do not seek to defeat them. If nothing is won at the conference table, we must first purify ourselves. We must begin to act only as we surely know that we love our enemies for Christ's sake.

King's method reveals an understanding of humanity, illumined by the cross of Christ. He did not live by extremes; to him the devils were not all on one side and the angels on the other. He knew the pride of the "haves" and he knew the rage of the oppressed; he knew the humanity they had in common, a humanity that could be recognized by both sides only as both passed through a valley of forgiveness, reconciliation, and renewal.

3. Acceptance of suffering. 'Love,' he said, 'will bring us to places where we will be denied. This will cause suffering. We know that to win a revolution we must often walk through streams of blood. We will see to it that the blood of others will never be shed by us.' He sometimes recalled 1 Peter 2:19-24: 'For it is a fine thing if man endure the pain of undeserved suffering because God is in his thoughts. What credit is there in fortitude when you have done wrong and are beaten for it? But when you have behaved well and suffer for it, your fortitude is a fine thing in the sight of God. To that you were called, because Christ suffered on your behalf, and thereby left you an example.' This is the love that conquers the world. And it must be said that the power of nonviolent resistance, reflecting suffering love, is stronger than the violence of the powerful.

4. Reconciliation as the purpose of action. The end of our action, King insisted, was reached only when the conflicting parties were wholly reconciled to each other. There could be no victors. There could only be reconciled men. So the example of kingdoms, and other more violent voices prevail, one thing remains certain: when we one day ask which method touched human conscience most deeply and which method gave strongest impulse towards conversion and renewal, we will not have long to wonder.

In the long run, the method of nonviolent resistance has the longest staying power and the deepest influence because in it the relationship between means and ends reflects the way God takes to His own future Kingdom. (Verkuyl & Nordholt, 1974, p 56-57)

### The Law and the Poor

Dr. Michael de Bogaert, director of the Xavier Institute of Social Sciences in India asks the question, "Where do the poor stand in the matter of human rights?" His answer is "Nowhere!" The reasons he gives are:

1. Because the poor do not know their legal rights.
2. Because despite the ideal of democracy India is still a land of unequal's.
3. Because the poor are fearful and subservient in the face of landowners and government officers.
4. Because they accept the benevolence of the government in the form of token scholarships, reservations, and uplift schemes.

"The poor," says Dr. de Bogaert, "need to organize to claim their rights."

(a) Discuss this analysis in your group, or (b) survey a group of the poor to check his conclusions, or (c) brainstorm about solutions to injustice for the poor.

### Postscript

#### The Golden Rule: A Meditation

Hidden in the obscure pronouncements of the ancient biblical law (Lev. 19:18) and in the preamble to a story of Jesus (Luke 10:27) is the most profound social institution ever given. We call it the 'Golden Rule'. Wherever it is followed, its luminosity is seen across the world, and its impact on the individual conscience and social organizations reminds us that it might just be possible for fallen human beings to 'love our neighbors as ourselves.'

To love our neighbors as ourselves is to become color blind in a racist world. To seek enriching cross-cultural relationships. To build bridges of understanding with those outwardly different but inwardly identical to ourselves – black people, white people, and brown people who all laugh in joy and cry in pain, who hope and despair, who succeed and fail.

To love our neighbors as ourselves is to make sure the poor have a place to stand. To accord all people an equal status regardless of their socio-economic



circumstances. To walk for the uplifting of the oppressed so that they might experience the dignity of independence, the enrichment of education, the security of employment, the blessing of health, and the boon of a home.

To love our neighbor as ourselves is to be free from sexism. To acknowledge the differences between men and women and appreciate the wonder of complementarity. It is to offer and accept the unique perceptions each can bring to the other. It is to know both are formed in the image of God.

To love our neighbor as ourselves is to share our goods so the gap between the poor and the rich is not so large. To ensure that none are hungry while others are surfeited. None in a palace while others are shelterless. None at peace amidst victims of war. It is to go to the poor with an open hand and a generous heart. To sleep on the floor in their huts and welcome them as guests in our homes. To pay the wages they deserve and generate the employment they need.

To love our neighbor as ourselves is to love God as He must be loved. Selflessly, honestly, openly, it is to offer Him our heart and soul, our strength and mind that He might infuse them with His love and transform us into instruments in His plan to abolish the estrangements and hatreds, the hurts and the misunderstandings and make us all neighbors in the heavenly kingdom.

To love our neighbor as ourselves is to walk in the footsteps of the greatest lovers of all time, the selfless Jesus of Nazareth.  
(Author Unknown)

## TRANSFORMATION: THE EQUALITY MODEL

### STUDY 4: HELPING THE POOR PARTICIPATE

#### The Biblical Setting

As with the other laws about the Hebrew peoples' relationship to God and to the community, there are some specific laws relating to the land into which God was leading them, and the type of society He wanted them to create there. This society would be a stark contrast to the stratification and oppression of Egypt and to the superstition and fragmentation of Canaan. These laws were designed to enable them to create and sustain a just and equitable society. Disparity between rich and poor was to be resisted because everything belonged to the community, all bore the image of God, and all were valued by Him. The concentration of wealth in the hands of one person or group posed the dual dangers of that person or group thinking they were of more value than others and misusing the power money gave them. So wealth in Israel was to be a sign of the interdependence, sharing, and mutual support of the tribes for each other.

From your knowledge of Egyptian and Canaanite society at that time (1300-1250 B.C.) choose adjectives which you think might apply to each from the following list: discriminatory, decentralized, disorganized, wealthy, oppressive, warlike, urbanized, feudal, rural, and dictatorial.

#### The Pattern

The equality of society was foreshadowed in two events – the provision of manna and quail in the wilderness and the distribution of the land.

1) Provision of Manna and Quail. God's provision in the wilderness was the greatest feeding program ever conducted. In length it far surpassed the seven year drought supply managed by Joseph; it lasted for 40 years, a whole generation. In consistency; there were no failures of supply, manipulation of ration cards, bribery, or sale on the black market. In balance: every morning there was carbohydrates and vitamin C and every evening protein was supplied. In justice: "He who gathered much did not have too much; he who gathered little did not have too little. Everyone gathered as much as he needed" (Exodus 16:17-18).

God taught the people not to be greedy by making the extra manna go rotten, and He taught them to exercise faith rather than demand security – every night they went to bed with no guarantee that God would meet their needs on the morrow but he always did.

2) Distribution of Land. God instructed, "To the larger group give a larger inheritance, and to a smaller one give a smaller one. Each one is to receive its inheritance according to the number of those listed" (Num. 26:54). This was exactly the pattern of the gathering of the manna. The generation spent in the wilderness was not just a punishment, it was a retraining after the exploitation of Egypt. The Hebrews learnt and applied the lesson, for when the two and a half tribes who settled on the west bank of the Jordan were given the choice of remaining with their families and flocks or helping their brothers claim their possession they replied, "We will not return to our homes until every Israelite has received his inheritance" (Num. 32:18).

Research and report the land owning patterns in your area, state, or country.

3) The Aim. The aim of these laws is more graphically expressed in Deuteronomy 15:4; "There ought not to be any poor among you in the land the Lord your God is giving you if you fully obey the Lord your God." The same passage later notes, "There will always be poor people in the land" (15:10), an observation echoed by Jesus more than half a millennium later. Poverty, however, was not meant to be a permanent condition in Israel. When it did occur specific steps were taken to redistribute the wealth of the society and because they once suffered as outsiders in Egypt their generosity was also to extend to the sojourners and aliens in their land.

In India, steps to uplift the poor include:

- reserved places in educational institutions
- development programs among the rural and urban poor.
- loan melas.
- reserved jobs in government.
- food for work programs.

Rate these according to your view of their effectiveness. Why are they effective or ineffective? Is poverty worse in cities or in rural areas? Where wealth is more evenly distributed?

### Five Laws for a Just and Equal society

This section looks at five specific laws given to the Hebrew people to achieve and maintain justice and equality in their society.

Law 1; One-third Tithe to the Poor. Deuteronomy 26:12-15 gives the command that the tithe, usually the possession of the Levites in lieu of land and in recognition of their religious service, was to be distributed to a wider group every third year. What were the four defined target groups?

The common feature of these groups was that they were usually the poorest people in the society. This was the major provision to alleviate their poverty and the hunger that always accompanies poverty. The reason given for sharing the tithe is "so that they may eat in your towns and be satisfied." Other provisions included levirate marriage (the responsibility of the nearest male relative to take care of his brother's widow and even to raise children for his brother with her and commands to always treat the aliens in the land as equal members of the community.

The command about the distribution of the tithe among the poor follows immediately after the section on the offering of first fruits to God in recognition of His goodness to them. The principle of putting God first was built into many of the ceremonial laws. This guaranteed that God was not forgotten.

There is no question in this least radical of the commands highlighted in this study, about selling assets and giving to the poor as Jesus instructed the rich young ruler to do (Mt. 19:31) and as many of the richer Christians in the early church did (Acts 2:45, 4:32). This provision

relates to the distribution of the supplies – the use of the "Lord's tithe". The malady of many churches is that members do not give their tithes. There is no surplus to distribute! In such a situation, the minister, like the Levites who depended on the offerings of the people for their livelihood, might himself set an example of radical sharing with the needy.

Some might question how widely these laws can be applied today. The options are:

- a) They apply only to Israel in the Old Testament period
- b) They apply also to the church.
- c) They could work in local communities, i.e. some Mennonite and Hutterite communities in Canada and the USA.
- d) They could be applied on a national scale today.

Which option do you support and why?

### Law 2: Leave Some Crops for the Poor to Glean.

When you reap the harvest of your land do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and the alien. I am the Lord your God. (Lev. 19:9-10)

The refrain at the end of the verse, "I am the Lord your God," which recurs through this book seems to suggest two things: first, it is like a seal establishing the authority of the command – it comes from God Himself. Secondly, it reflects the character of God – if He were living in the context of this society these were the things He would do. The speech begins "The Lord said to Moses, 'Speak to the entire assembly of Israel and say to them, Be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy'" (Lev. 19:12). Which do you think is the dominant meaning?

Genesis declares that humanity bears God's image. However people only reflect that image when they act as God would act, when they do what God would do. This passage is a forceful reminder that God would care for the poor.

A Contemporary Parallel: The Rice Harvest in Bangladesh. Bangladesh, a Muslim country, observes this practice of Israel as the command is repeated in the Koran. At harvest time the orphans and widows in their scant clothing and tattered saris follow the reapers, gathering what is left. They know that at this one time of the year they will not go to bed haunted by the pain of hunger.

A Biblical Example: Ruth 2. Read this chapter and mark the following statements true or false. Note the verses which support your choice.

Ruth was rich. T or F

Ruth was a widow. T or F

Ruth collected rice. T or F

Ruth was an Israelite. T or F

The reapers never left anything. T or F

Poor female gleaners were sometimes molested. T or F

The landowner objected to Ruth's gleaning. T or F

Ruth gleaned throughout the harvest season. T or F

Farmers regularly allowed the poor to glean. T or F

Commands about gleaning also come in Deuteronomy 24:19-22. There are three types of crops mentioned and three beneficiary groups. What are they? In verse 22 an additional reason is given for keeping this command. What is that reason?

Law 3: Charge No Interest to the Poor. First note the biblical references Exodus 22:25, Deuteronomy 23:20, and Leviticus 25:35-37. The command applies to a) members of your own community with whom you share traditions and faith, b) the poor and needy. According to Deuteronomy 23:20 the command does not apply to foreigners. Would it apply to commercial transactions? Discuss this in the group.

The Koran repeats this injunction also, so that a key element in the new Islamic economic order is interest-free credit. Research to see who this applies to and under what conditions.

The reality in rural Bangladesh is that the money-lender has great power and wealth. He is often the worst exploiter of the poor and the marginal farmer. The usual interest rate is 10 percent per month, that is 120 percent per annum. IN many cases the real interest rate is much higher as part of the crop may be claimed, interest is deducted in advance and inflated figures may be record on the documents. Where the borrower is an illiterate farmer exploitation is easy and common. The result is that many marginal farmers lose their land. To such people, rural bank loans at 15% are "good news."

A New Testament equivalent to the ancient Israelite and modern Bangladeshi moneylenders is the tax collector. Parallels include:

- a) They often collected three or four times the necessary amount (Lk. 19:8).
- b) They sometimes imprisoned their debtors (Mt. 18:28-30).
- c) They were socially despised (Lk. 18:13, 19:7).
- d) They were usually very rich (Lk. 19:2).
- e) They oppressed their own people (Mt. 9:9)

Yet Jesus was a friend to tax collectors! He chose a tax collector to be one of the disciples. Another, little Zacchaeus, found salvation. His response was to sell his many possessions and give half the proceeds to the poor and to repay four times the amount he had robbed.

Look up Matthew 9:10-13, Luke 18:8-14 and 19:1-10 to confirm the conclusion and add any other characteristics you are aware of.

Write a short profile of the money lender in your society.

Banks offering low interest rates or special loans for the poor can be an instrument of justice and equality in society. To what extent do you think they are?

Law 4: Cancel Debts Every Seven Years. Read Deuteronomy 15:1-11.

Analyze the passage under the following headings:

The command.....	v. 1
The beneficiaries.....	v. 2-7
The attitude.....	v. 8-10
The context.....	v. 11
The exemptions.....	v. 13

The results.....	v. 4-6
The caution.....	v. 9
The aim.....	v. 4

This theme is taken up in the New Testament when Jesus quotes verse 11 in Luke 6:34 and 6:38. "And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you. Even sinners lend to sinners expecting to be repaid in full." "A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

The command to cancel monetary debts is linked to freeing human servants from obligations and dependency (see Deut. 15:12-18 and Ex. 21:2-6). It is also set in the context of worship and celebration of God's goodness: "At the end of every seven years, in the year for canceling debts, during the feast of Tabernacles...assemble all the people and read this law" (Deut. 31:10). It was a sacred tradition of the people of God to be passed on from generation to generation.

The parallel is with God's action in creation where six days of work were followed by a day of rest (Lev. 25:1-7). The contrast is with Pharaoh who refused to release the Hebrew slaves even after several generations of hard labor (Ex. 1-15). In any description of the poverty cycle indebtedness is always a feature. In your society for what things do the poor incur most debts? Compare your lists and note what amounts of money might be involved.

What about beggars? We often meet the poor and needy in the form of beggars who come to our door, accost us on the streets and wait outside our worship places. Does this command relate to giving to them? Note that the canceling of debts is a structural solution to a societal problem whereas giving to beggars is a charity or welfare response. In the range of approaches to the needs of society – welfare, development, and liberation – one is at the beginning point the other at the end. Canceling debts every seven years is much more likely to lead to transformation than giving to beggars. One action endorses dependency, the other ends it.

Law 5: Give back Land Every 50 Years. The Feast of Tabernacles was the time for learning, remembering, and acting on the command to cancel debts every seven years. The Day of Atonement, the holiest day of the most sacred and special of Jewish celebrations, the Passover Festival, was the occasion for giving back land to its original and rightful owners every 50 years. Thus in the Bible the sacred and the social, worship and justice are inseparable.

Read Leviticus 25:8-55 and note which verses contain the following statements about the jubilee.

- a) God owned the land.
- b) The 50<sup>th</sup> year was a time of celebration.
- c) The land was to be allowed to produce naturally.
- d) Everyone was to celebrate with his own family and clan.
- e) All were to return to their own land
- f) The crop bearing capacity determined the land price.
- g) This was a constant anti-inflationary measure.
- h) The people would not starve.

- i) Relatives should help their kin reoccupy their land.
- j) Rural land and village homes could not be sold permanently.
- k) Urban property could be exchanged permanently.
- l) The property of the priests could not be sold.
- m) Fellow Hebrews could not be owned as property.
- n) All Hebrew slaves were to be released at the Jubilee.

### Comments on Equality

Ron Sider in Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger comments:

The Jubilee principle: Leviticus 25, is one of the most radical texts in all of Scripture. At least it seems that way for people born in countries committed to laissez-faire economics. Every fifty years, God said, all land was to return to the original owners – without compensation. Physical handicaps, death of a breadwinner, or lack of natural ability may lead some people to become poorer than others. But God does not want such disadvantages to lead to greater and greater divergence of wealth and poverty. God therefore gave His people a law which would equalize land ownership every fifty years (Lev. 25:10-24). The year of Jubilee envisages an institutionalized structure that affects everyone automatically. It is to be the poor person's right to receive back his inheritance at the time of Jubilee. Returning land is not a charitable courtesy that the wealthy may extend if they please.

The Jubilee Principle also provides for self-help and self-development. With his land returned the poor person could again earn his own living. The biblical concept of Jubilee underlines the importance of institutionalized mechanisms and structures that promote justice.

Because he disapproves of extremes of wealth among His people, God ordains equalizing mechanisms like the Year of Jubilee.  
(1978, p. 78-81)

The accompanying concern that the land should not be inherited out of the tribe meant that even within the community equality must be preserved. The test case was Zelophehad's daughters', recorded in Numbers 27:1-11 and 27:36. For this to work the women could inherit but they must marry within the tribe so that at the time of Jubilee the land remained in that tribe. So while maintenance of equality and eradication of poverty were the major purposes of the Jubilee, it also had a wide ranging stabilizing effect on Israelite society.

### Review

- a) Note the five laws specifically designed to create and maintain equality within Israelite society.
- b) Discuss how widely these can be applied today.
- c) Suggest 20<sup>th</sup> century equivalents to these laws.  
Example 1: One-third of church budgets to relief and development activities.  
Example 2: Purchase extra groceries and share them with the poor.  
Example 3: Land according to need.  
Example 4: Loans on the basis that if they repay regularly you cancel the last installment.

Example 5: Create a loan fund to enable landless farmers to buy property.

### Vinoba Bhave and the Bhoodan Movement

Vinoba Bhave, like Mahatma Gandhi, was one of the leading advocates of Indian independence. When it came however, he also realized that the British Raj had merely been replaced by the Indian Raj and no real transformation of the values and structures of society had taken place. In meditation on God's will for independent India he conceived the idea of redistribution of land to the landless. He envisioned himself going to landowning families, and claiming as an extra son, part of the property on behalf of the poor. His target was 50 million acres. One-sixth of India's cultivable land.

When he first suggested the idea he was opposed from all sides but claimed the issue was not one of charity but of justice and the future of India was at stake. In hundreds of villages people met and formed *gramsabhas* to redistribute the land until no person lacked land to cultivate.

The first stage was *prapti*, the promise of land. The title deeds of land would be handed over to the *gramsabha* for redistribution to the landless. The second stage was *pusti*, implementation of the redistribution of land, during which the *gramsabha* made sure of the genuineness of the gift and the eligibility of those who would receive it. The third stage was to be *nirman*, the completion of the redistribution of land and the beginning of *gram kosh*, the integrated development of the village.

The movement was initiated in Hyderabad in 1951. It met with startling initial success. Lest the movement be understood only as being effective in favorable conditions, Vinoba advocated it should be put to the test in a state where conditions were considered least favorable. So Vinoba called his workers to concentrate on Bihar where things were very difficult. By 1967 more than 250,000 people had participated in the movement, four million acres of cultivable land had been transferred and 50,000 villages – 17,000 in Bihar – had been declared *gramdan*.

There were many failings. Not enough land was offered; the transfer process was often too slow; some land was useless; some was repossessed and the *bhoodan* workers failed to sustain the vision. Yet it still produced the greatest voluntary transfer of land in history and demonstrated an alternative to the status quo and a viable strategy for non-violent change.

Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of this experiment in justice and equality. How important do you think the religious dimension of the vision and its implementation was and is for social change?

Case Study: Land Redistribution in Lothar. Land tenure is a serious problem in Lothar as half of the farmers do not have their own land. The average holding is about two acres with large farmers owning up to 30 acres. The government has placed a restriction on the amount of land any one individual may own at 30 acres but some large operators evade this restriction by placing 30 acres in the name of each of several members in the family.

Many of the peasants rent land under an arrangement where the tenant keeps 50 percent of the crop and the landlord receives the remaining half for supplying the inputs including seed



and fertilizers. The tenant never gets more than a one year contract on the land. The landlords fear losing their land because the tenants may lay claim to the land if they farm it for too many years in succession.

Among the more serious problems created by the land tenure system are the reduced fertilizer applications because of the uncertainty of continued tenancy, poor farming practices, and indebtedness. Devise an on-revolutionary way of improving this tenure system.

1. Where would you get the land from?
  - a) How would you obtain it? By confiscation? If so, how would you take the land? Through compensation? If so, would it be partial? Complete?
  - b) Would you consolidate the holdings for an individual peasant?
2. What acreage restrictions would you place, if any?
  - a) How would you enforce them?
  - b) How would you treat plantations where large-scale operations are, or seem to be, most efficient?
- 3). How would peasants obtain title to their land under your scheme?
  - a) Purchase? Under what terms?
  - b) Subsidized purchase?
  - c) How could you finance this redistribution?
4. What criteria would you utilize in determining who gets the land?
  - a) Would you allow a peasant who has half an acre of land to buy additional land before giving someone without any land an opportunity to purchase land?
  - b) Would you sell to someone who had gainful employment in industry but who wanted to farm?

(Source: EFICOR, India)

### Counterpoint

Equality in society is the agreed ideal of Marxism, socialism, the welfare state, and revolutionary movements, but is it a realistic dream? All people are not equal intellectually or socially in any society. What is being suggested here, in the example of the Hebrew nation and God's laws for them, is not absolute sameness but a sharing of resources and the structuring of new beginnings, so that everyone may equally enjoy the heritage God has prepared for them. Following these laws would have dramatic beneficial results for them individually and collectively so that Israelite society would be a model for the world of human dignity and societal justice. God has said. "I broke the bars of your yoke and enabled you to walk with heads held high" (Lev. 26:13), and , "Follow justice and justice alone, so that you may live and possess the land the Lord your God is giving you" (Deut. 16:20).

### Conclusion

The equality model seeks to place, not just the results of production but the means of production into the hands of every family in society. In Israel the method to achieve this was not violence or force but the command of God and appeal to justice. History suggests this ideal was never fully practiced but neither was it completely forgotten. It meant that Hebrew families maintained a close relationship with their land and in the rural areas at least, extremes of wealth and poverty did not emerge.

A similar event took place in Africa a few years ago Joseph Donders in Non-Bourgeois Theology records the following event:

The Gabbra are a nomadic people in the northeast of Kenya. They live in one of the driest areas of East Africa. In 1981 they celebrated their year of jubilee, ending another cycle of fifty years in their existence. In the year of the jubilee crooked affairs are straightened out, injustice is righted, debts are settled, cattle (the only property) are reallocated, and sins are forgiven. This is not a myth: it is not a story: it is not an ideal that they believe should be fulfilled. It really happened in 1981 after a year of preparations. Considering the rapid encroachment of western life-patterns the Gabbra year of the Jubilee may have occurred for the last time but in 1981 the Gabbra managed to keep to their old tradition. (1985, p. 75)

#### Postscript

On the Liberty Bell in America there are inscribed words from Leviticus 25: "Proclaim liberty throughout the land." The complete verse says, "Consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you; each one of you is to return to his family property and each one to this own clan" (Lev. 25:10).

## TRANSFORMATION: THE BUREAUCRATIC APPROACH

### STUDY 5: PROBLEMS AND POTENTIAL IN TOP-DOWN DEVELOPMENT

#### Top-down or Bottom-up

One of the liveliest and longest debates in development is about the relative merits of the "top-down" and "bottom-up" approaches. In the Old Testament period the top-down approach is best expressed by the kings of Israel and Judah. Today's equivalent would be governments and multinational agencies. This approach seeks to gather resources and deliver services to the poor. In practice, however, most of the benefits are monopolized by the rich and often only a small proportion of the money intended for the poor actually reaches them. The bottom-up approach seeks to conscientize and mobilize the poor to develop themselves. This may involve challenging the unjust structures of society in order to claim a greater proportion of the available resources for themselves.

Vinay Samuel and Chris Sugden write:

The king of Israel was not only to be an ideal citizen, he had the special role of exercising God's help on the side of the poor. J. Dupont writes: 'The main function of the king of Israel was to ensure justice for his subjects. His subjects included the powerful and the weak, the rich and the poor. The powerful and the rich would always manage to abuse their power to oppress and exploit the weak and poor, who, unable to defend themselves, would gradually founder in misery. It was the king's duty to restore the balance. He was the defender of those who could not defend themselves: he would guarantee the rights of the weak in the face of the powerful, as well as repress the rich who threatened the rights of the poor.'

So the Book of Proverbs describes the task of the king in the words of King Lemuel's mother: 'Speak up for the people who cannot speak for themselves. Protect the rights of all who are helpless. Speak for them and be a righteous judge. Protect the rights of the poor and needy.'

But the kings of Israel rarely matched up to this picture. Ahab's seizure of Naboth's vineyard is but one example of the greed of the leaders that Ezekiel castigated in chapter 34. They took care of themselves and not of the sheep, they failed to take care of the weak, sick, the hurt, and the lost. They ate the best grass and trampled what they could not eat. They muddied the waters they did not drink. So God raised up prophets, not to promulgate a new law, but to recover and make relevant the law's emphasis on justice, which the kings had forgotten.

(Unpublished paper, "Social Justice: Biblical Themes and Practical Expression".)

Read Ezekiel 34 and list the faults of the leaders of Israel.

#### Expectations vs. Experience

When the tribes of Israel asked for a king they obviously did not expect to be exploited by their own leaders. In fact they wanted a king so they could be united and strong like the nations around them. They may also have wanted to legitimize their conformity to the religious and social practices of their neighbors rather than continue to try to live up to the high standards of a just and holy God. The specific event which made them appeal for a king was that Eli's sons "turned aside after dishonest gain and accepted bribes and perverted justice" (1 Sam. 8:3)

God and Samuel predicted that the kings would be no better. List the problems likely to arise when too much power is concentrated in one person's hands, according to a) Deut. 17:14-20 and b) 1 Sam. 8:10-18.

How many of these predictions were fulfilled by Solomon, Israel's third king?

How many seem to be true of your country today?

Of course there were good rich men, priests, and kings. What were the characteristics of a) Job (see Job 29:12-17)? b) of Eli (1 Sam 12:3)? of c) David (2 Sam. 23:3-4)

Research: Read through 2 Kings and count how many kings of Israel and Judah did what was right in the eyes of the Lord and how many did evil.

### Biblical Patterns of National Leadership

Kings were not the only type of national leadership described in the Old Testament. Others included:

1) The Clan Patriarch System. Later Hebrew historians and prophets referred back to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as the "founders of the nation", and indeed they were. Yet at the time that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob lived the Hebrews were barely a clan. They were really only a family group. Abraham had only two sons, one of whom he sent away. Isaac also had just two sons – Jacob and Esau who went in different directions. Jacob alone had a large family with 12 sons. However, while their immediate families may have been small, they were all wealthy nomadic farmers with many flocks and shepherds and for these people the family head took responsibility. They were something like a village headman in rural India or a tribal chief in Africa.

2) The Divinely Appointed Leader. Details of the next 400 years are lost in history. It is apparent that Jacob and his clan settled in Goshen, Egypt and also that they became slaves to the Egyptians. When and how they lost their rights and autonomy is not described. Moses' life story is the record of God intervening to rescue the Hebrews from slavery through the mediation of His representative who was prepared for stage one of the process by living as an Egyptian prince for 40 years and equipped for stage two by being a shepherd in Midian for 40 years. While Moses' leadership was challenged by the people and his family (ex. 4:20ff, Num. 15:1ff) he was the ultimate authority under God. He shared the leadership in two ways. Aaron, his brother, became the leader of religious ritual and the founder of the permanent priesthood. Leaders of thousands, of hundreds, or fifties, and of tens were appointed to help in decision making and dispute settling (Ex. 17).

Joshua continued the pattern of a non-hereditary leader appointed by God. After a lapse of approximately 200 years Samuel also fulfilled this role combining administrative and prophetic leadership.

3) The Local Judges. For the first two centuries of settlement in the Promised Land each community was led by local leaders. Except to combat attacks from neighboring peoples there was no strong centralized leadership nor any particular urban center recognized as an administrative or political capital.

One of the local judges usually had national responsibilities. The election system varied. Some judges sought this leadership; others, such as Gideon, refused it. When any tribe of Israel was attacked, messages soon brought men of the other tribes to their aid. After the battle, all returned to their respective homes, families, and occupations. One of the most successful judges was a woman, Deborah. She strengthened village life and brought peace to the land for 40 years.

Towards the end of the period of judges the nation's unity, so strong when they established themselves in the land, had weakened to the point where there was very little cooperation. Many had adopted local Canaanite customs and religious beliefs, and "everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (Jdg. 21:25)

4) The Messiah. The Old Testament vision of the Messiah was of an ideal king would reign in justice and peace. He would sit on the throne of David and rule from Jerusalem. The nation would prosper and become famous so that all the nations of the earth would come to Jerusalem to worship. While power and authority would be concentrated in the hands of one person, this would benefit all the people. Jesus contradicted these expectations by:

1. Not living in a palace.
2. Staying in rural Galilee and only visiting Jerusalem on a few occasions.
3. Being a poor commoner rather than a rich king.
4. Dealing with personal rather than national issues.

#### Power Relationships in the Kingship Period.

There were four main groups influencing decision-making in Israel and Judah.

1. The king and his nobles.
2. The priests.
3. The prophets.
4. The people.

Each group had different interests and methods of exerting influence and while the kings were officially the controlling group at times the real authority lay with the priests, prophets, or people (Figure 5.1).

State the percentage of the population which you think belonged to each group in Figure 5.1. Were the groups always separate? If not, what alliances were formed and why? Redraw the boxes to represent the size of each group. What are the modern equivalents of these power groups?

Another illustration of the injustice of the top-down approach is an analysis of how the aid dollar is spent. A recent calculation for a Christian aid agency estimated that for every dollar given, approximately 15 percent reached the intended beneficiaries. The breakdown is pictured in Figure 5.2. Other estimates calculate that 40% reaches the beneficiaries. Very seldom would more than 60% be distributed to the intended recipients. Discuss this example.

## How Can the People Participate?

In an agricultural society with only simple technology, most of this time is spent surviving. Water and food must be collected prepared, and cooked. Fields must be ploughed with animals and simple ploughs, or dug by hand. Cows, sheep, and goats need constant tending. There is little time left for leisure, politics, or religion.

However, primitive agriculture, except in very fertile areas with irrigation or regular rainfall is a very seasonal activity. Except at planting and harvest time, there is not much work and marginal farmers or landless farm laborers seek alternative off-season employment. At such times they migrate to the city, set up temporary shelters and look for work. As in the rural area the whole day is likely to be spent in earning enough to live. For the poor, life is a struggle. If they have little education or few marketable skills they are usually eliminated from any decision making. Their lives are controlled by others.

The theological questions raised by this profile are, "How can the image of God be reflected by people who have been reduced to pawns?" And, "How can the poor/common people be involved in shaping their own lives and destinies?"

Attempts to include the poor in decision making have included:

- a) Giving voting rights to all adults in the society to elect local and national leaders.
- b) Creation of village councils and dispersal of power to local groups.
- c) Reservation of positions for the poor on decision making bodies
- d) Insistence that membership on public sector committees represent the proportions in the population.
- e) Election of local people only, for public office.

Assess the extent to which these and other measures to involve the people in decision making are practiced in your community.

## The Flow of Resources

There are three main channels by which aid flows from rich to poorer nations: a) government to government assistance, b) voluntary agency involvement, and c) commercial investment. Each has advantages and disadvantages. From the characteristics stated below, state which type of aid they most apply to:

- a) Countrywide schemes.
- b) Rapid transfer of funds.
- c) Support of industry.
- d) Cost effectiveness.
- e) Accountability.
- f) Benefits to the elite.
- g). Help for the poor.
- h) Emergency assistance.
- i) Holistic approach.
- j) Decisions in sending countries.
- k) Decisions by local beneficiaries.

Give one example and share the reason for your choice with others.

On a macro level many writers suggest that very little aid really reaches the poor and that instead, most benefit returns to the donors.

Consider the following statement by George Dunne.

The classicists, while admitting that the first fruits of economic growth are reaped by the present holder of economic power, contend that ultimately the benefit will seep down to the impoverished masses. This is the line of reasoning of the present managers of Brazil's economic 'boom'. The difficulty with this line of reasoning is that the 'ultimately' can be awfully long in coming. It may be a much longer time than the impoverished two-thirds of humanity are willing, or should be expected, to wait. There are substantial sectors of society – 'pockets of poverty' they are called – in the affluence world still waiting for the seepage to reach them. In the underdeveloped world the situation is reversed. Here small islets of often outrageous wealth are surrounded by a vast sea of poverty

Waldron Scott in Bring Forth Justice uses a diagram to illustrate the failure of aid (Figure 5.3). There are many specific examples of gross misuse of aid funds. In Bangladesh in 1986 an aid program sponsored by a European country was canceled because 82 percent of the expenses went into supporting expatriate personnel! Later the same year (on 27 October) BBC reported that western governments were expressing concern about a net outflow of capital from developing countries.

The failure of aid and development has led to some pessimistic views. Arthur Simon reports two in his book Bread for the World.

One idea made popular by scientist Gerrett Hardin pictures the rich countries as lifeboats filled to near capacity. If more people are pulled in, the lifeboats will sink and everyone will drown. SO those in the lifeboats have to push away others who are trying to climb in. By this view, to feed the hungry and bring them medical care is to overload the lifeboats and, therefore, precisely the wrong thing to do.

The other argument, suggested by William and Paul Paddock in their book Famine 1975! uses a military idea called 'triage'. The world is like a battle field covered with wounded soldiers but not enough medics. What to do? 1) Some will die no matter what help they get. Abandon them. 2) Others can survive without treatment. Ignore them also. 3) Help only those who, though wounded seriously, can be saved with immediate care. Applied to the hunger-population dilemma, a triage means deciding which countries are beyond assistance and letting their people starve (1984, p. 40)

Prepare and conduct a debate on one of these views.

### The Beneficiaries

Having struggled to maximize the percentage of aid and development money reaching the poor it must yet be asked, "Which poor?" Experience in a Christian relief and development agency in India indicates tendencies for:

- a) Relatives of staff becoming primary beneficiaries.
- b) Recipients of overseas funding to be paternalistic in the distribution of it.
- c) Money to encourage corruption.

A further question to consider in this study is: are the poor participants in the planning and design of the development activities intended to benefit them or merely recipients? If they are only consumers and not stewards of resources they are not fulfilling God's creation mandate. Many people involved in development programs would endorse Rev. Vinay Samuel's challenge, "We are to be stewards first and then consumers; the problem with many development agencies is that we have made people consumers." Discuss this statement.

After years of involvement in development programs two consultants concluded that their best contribution was not to critique various aid agencies but to share the questions they asked of all aid projects. They wrote "Seven Questions to ask an Aid Project."

1. Whose project is it? Is it the donor's agency's OR does it originate with the people involved?
2. Does the project diagnose the problem to be tackled as a technical or physical deficiency (i.e. poor farming methods or depleted soil) that can be overcome with the right technique and skills? OR is the physical or technical problem seen as only a reflection of social and political relationships that need to be altered?
3. Does it reinforce the economic and political power of a certain group which then becomes more resistant to change that might abolish its privileges? OR does it generate a shift in power to the powerless?
4. Does it mean the intervention of outside experts, taking away local initiative? OR does it generate a process of democratic decision making and a thrust toward self-reliance that can carry over to future projects?
5. Does it reinforce dependence on outside sources of material and skills? OR does it use local ingenuity, local labor, and local materials, and can it be maintained with local skills?
6. Does it merely help individuals adjust to their exploitation by such external forces as the national government or the international market? OR does it encourage an understanding of that exploitation and a resistance to it?
7. Will success only be measured by the achievement of the preset plans of outsiders? OR is the project open-ended, with success measured by the local people as the project progresses?

Use these questions to evaluate an aid project. Score the answers.



## Conclusion

The final pessimistic verdict on most of the kings of Israel and Judah is also often passed on well-meaning development programs. An Indian poet, Cecil Rajendra in "Song for the Unsung" laments the death of a village.

Here  
intimations of death  
hang  
heavy in the air.  
Everywhere  
there is the stench of decay and despair.

The river  
strangled by  
exigencies of  
industrialization  
is dying...  
and nobody cares.

The fish  
in the river  
poisoned by  
progress's vomit  
are dying...  
and nobody cares.  
The birds  
that feed on the fish  
in the river  
poisoned by  
progress's excrement  
are dying...  
and nobody cares

And so  
a once-proud village  
sustained  
for centuries by the richness  
of this river  
dies...  
and nobody cares.

To that mammon  
DEVELOPMENT  
our high-priests  
sacrifice our customs  
our culture  
our traditions  
and environment

and nobody cares.

We blind mice,  
we blind mice,  
see what we've done,  
see what we've done,  
We all ran after  
Progress's wife  
she cut off our heads  
with Development's knife  
have you ever seen such fools in your life  
as we blind mice?

Now add your own example of a successful or unsuccessful aid or development program.

Figure 5.1 (page 180)

TRANSFORMATION: THE JUSTICE QUESTION  
STUDY 6: BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES AND CURRENT ISSUES

The Prophetic Perspective

The prophets of ancient Israel and their contemporary counterparts rank among the most interesting if not the most popular people in society. The Old Testament tells of the towering Moses, challenging the might of Egypt; of the lone Elijah, confronting 400 prophets of Baal; of Elisha, nicknamed "old baldy" by a group of youths, yet able, in the name of Yahweh, to incite a popular rebellion that overthrew the Omri dynasty.

From the 8<sup>th</sup> Century B.C. There rings out the thundering voice of Amos: "For three transgressions and for four I will not revoke the punishment." There was the courtly Isaiah, whose concern for the poor led him to challenge the king. Then there was dramatic Jeremiah, whose enacted predictions about Jerusalem proved true.

For some prophets it was a lifetime vocation, for others a brief campaign. The common threads in their life stories were first that they were called by God and second they called for justice in society as an expression of God's will.

In fact, while this course appears under the title of "Social Transformation" the most common biblical word used to describe the Christian vision for society is that of "justice." It appears more than 300 times in the Old Testament. The biblical perspective is that while there are disasters that require a response, equality to be sought, and the desire for development, the real need, in the long term, is to establish justice in society. This was the perspective of the prophets.

Using a Bible dictionary, identify three key verses on the topic of justice. Explain your choice to the group.

The Problem of Oppression

In Bible of the Oppressed Else Tamez explains the meaning of the nine Hebrew words used for oppression (1982, p. 8-9). What follows is a brief summary of an analysis of certain Hebrew words in their contexts.

1. The experience of oppression is closely connected with the antagonism that exists between rich and poor, whether these be whole nations or sectors within nations.
2. The experience of oppression involves:
  - a) '*anah*': the degradation of the human person; oppression affects the inmost being of the person (see also *daka'*); the tyranny of the powerful; the sexual violation of women.
  - b) '*asoq*': the violent despoliation and consequently the impoverishment of the oppressed; ruthless violence; injustice.
  - c) '*lahats*': the smashing blow of the oppressor and the immediate outcry of the oppressed.

d) *nagash*: violent exploitation, chiefly by means of forced labor; compulsion to produce; pressure from the oppressor.

e) *yanah*: deadly violence used for the despoliation of the poor; exploitation in the form of enslavement; fraud.

f) *ratsats*: the crushing and despoiling of the poor.

g) *daka*: the grinding effect of oppression that penetrates the whole person, oppressing internally as well as externally; a knocking down; (the oppressor will experience the same in turn).

h) *dak*: the vexation of the poor, and the persistent hope of the poor for the establishment of a new and just order.

i) *tok*: the tyranny of the oppressor, exercised in deceit.

3. The underlying cause of oppression is the desire to pile up riches; this explains the repeated appearance of despoliation and theft. Some references are:

a) *anah*: Gen. 15:13, Ex. 1:11, Ex. 3:7, 2 Sam. 13:12 & 14, Ps. 119:75 & 107, Is. 24:4-5, Is. 53:3 & 7, Is. 58:10.

b) *ashag*: Lev. 19:13, Jer. 22:13, Ezek. 22:7 & 12, Hos. 12:7, Mic. 2:1-2.

c) *lahats*: Ex. 3:9, 1 Kgs. 22:27, Jer. 30:19-21, Is. 19:17 & 20, Is. 19:23-34, Amos 6:14

d) *nagash*: Ex. 1:14, Ex. 5:6 & 10, Ex. 5:13-14, 2 Kgs. 23:35, Job 39:7, Is. 3:5, Is. 58:30

e) *yanah*: Lev. 25:14, Ezek. 22:25 & 28-29, Ezek. 45:8, Ezek. 46:18, Zeph. 3:1

f) *ratsats*: Job 20:15 & 19-20, Is. 58:6, Jer. 22:17.

g) *daka*: Deut. 23:1, Ps. 89:11, Ps. 90:3, Ps. 94:5, Is. 56:11, Is. 57:1 & 15.

h) *dak*: Ps. 10:12 & 17-18, Ps. 74:21.

i) *tok*: Ps. 10:7, Ps. 55:11, Ps. 72:14, Prov 29:13.

Divide into groups and research together some of these biblical passages.

### The Prophetic Role

The last study on the role of kings noted that there were four power groups in Israel. The kings and the nobles, the priests, the prophets, and the people who were mostly poor (Figure

6.1). These formed alliances once the monarchy became established. Over a period of time kings and priests combined to monopolize benefits and oppress the people reducing them to poverty. God raised up the prophets to plead their cause and remind those in power of the standards of God's justice.

The role of the Old Testament prophets has been described by many Old Testament Scholars and Christian social analysts. They say:

Poverty was never sentimentalized by the prophets of Israel; in keeping with the rest of the Old Testament, it was regarded as an undesirable thing. The poor man was not just because he was poor, but the existential fact could not be ignored that poverty and injustice were frequent companions. It was the evil of other men that had created this situation and the whole prophetic effort was directed against this evil. (The Jerome Biblical Commentary, p. 233)

The Prophet's task was to recall the real purpose God had for His people. When Israel sells its firstborn, when it practices injustice instead of serving righteousness, when it deals unfairly instead of being merciful, when it treats people inhumanely, then God sends His prophets with a measuring rod to take the measure of the individual and collective life, the personal relations and the social structures of Israel. The measuring rod is the Law of Yahweh. (Verkuyl & Nordholt, 1974, p. 13)

Prophets sat in judgment on the institutions of Israel and became the conscience of the nation. This passing of judgment on the nation constituted a new role in the religions of the near East, and has become part of the tradition of Western culture since that time. (The Jerome Bible Commentary, p. 227, 229)

In Amos's Israel there would seem to be no hope for the hungry, short of a fundamental change in their economic and political position. Such a change would necessarily involve a redistribution of wealth and the wealth-producing resources. Unless the poor could rid themselves of debt and regain control of productive resources, principally land, they would be locked into a state of permanent exploitation. It is interesting that the biblical writers established clear provisions which, if enforced, could have prevented gross inequalities. Every seventh year was to be a sabbatical year in which all debts were forgiven, all Hebrew slaves freed, and the land allowed to lie fallow to restore its fertility (Deut. 15:1-6, 15:12-18 and Lev. 25:2-7)

Furthermore, every fiftieth year was to be a jubilee in which land automatically returned to its original owner; poor people in Israel were exploited at both ends of the food chain. Farmers because of indebtedness and injustice in the court were reduced to landless serfs, had their production taken from them, or were cut out of production completely. At the same time, poor consumers (including the displaced farmers who migrated from the countryside) could not contend with the monopoly power of the merchants. What's more, as land ownership was concentrated in the hands of a small group, the criterion dictating what was produced was profitability. Therefore, while the laborers who worked the

vineyards were hungry, the rich drank wine (a commodity priced well out of reach of the poor) in bowls (Amos 6:6).

Hunger in Amos's Israel was a consequence of economic structures that resulted in great gaps between the wealth and power of the rich compared to the condition of the poor. Once set in motion, these structures of inequality tended to be self-perpetuating. Merchants formed alliances with bankers, members of the court took bribes, and the unjust prosperity of the urban classes spilled over into the coffers of the rich (Nelson, 1980, p.5).

There are now four billion people in our world. From the point of view of Christianity – founded from an artisans' religion – priority belongs to the poor. So attractive is Christianity, however that the rich are constantly reinterpreting it in order to make it speak for their interests. Whenever this happens in the course of history, the practice of Christianity loses its prophetic quality – that is, its capacity to call to account those who are exploiting the poor in their own interests – and becomes merely a rationalization of the status quo. (Neal, 1977, p. 2)

### Who Were the Poor

In the Old Testament there were five Hebrew words for the poor. Each describes a dimension of poverty.

- 1) Chaser – lack or inadequacy. *Chaser* refers especially to hunger, for example, Job 30:3: "Through poverty and hard hunger, they gnaw the dry and desolate ground, picking mallow and the leaves of bushes." "Even the most refined woman of noble birth will secretly eat her own afterbirth, and begrudge it to her husband and children, for want of all things" (Deut. 28:57; 2 Samuel 34:29; Amos 4:6). People may also lack shelter (Prov. 6:32) and wisdom or diligence (Prov. 21:5; Jdg. 19:19-20)
  - 2) Yarash – dispossession. In 2 Samuel 12:1-4 a rich man robs a poor man and is rebuked. People can be dispossessed of land, possessions, and dignity. The cause is most frequently the injustice of the rich (Prov. 13:3, 18:23, 22:7).
  - 3) Dal – frailty and weakness. *Dal* is used to describe the thin cows of Egypt (Gen. 41:9), Saul's house, and Gideon's clan. The frailty was physical, political, military, or social. The poor are looked down on, deserted, easily crushed, and unable to recover from calamity.
  - 4) Ebyon – need and dependence. Amos 4:1, Job 5:5 & 15-16, Is. 14:30 and Is. 25:4 all describe those who have no resources of their own and so rely upon the charity and justice of others.
  - 5) Ani – oppression. This is the most frequent biblical perspective. For example, *ani* describes the slavery from which God liberated the Hebrews in Egypt. God is the refuge for the poor (Ps. 14:6, Is. 14:32). He opposes all who exploit the poor (Is. 26:6, Amos 2:7)
- The frequency of usage of these words is:
- a) *Chaser* – lack, 36
  - b) *Yarash* – dispossession, 31

- c) *Dal* – frailty, 57
- d) *Ebyon* – need, 61
- e) *Ani* – oppression, 80

Why do you think oppression is the most common cause of poverty in the Old Testament?  
What would be the most common cause today?

Orlando Costas comments:

The 'poor' continues to be an important category in the New Testament theology. The Greek term *ptochos* which means the 'wretched ones' appears 34 times. This evidence shows that the Bible takes seriously those who are materially poor. Those who are socially, economically, and politically marginalized; who are powerless because they are deprived of the basic essentials of life, are said to have God on their side. Their condition is a scandal an insult to the God who created humankind in his image, to live in community and to look after one another. (1979, p. 70-71)

### Views of Riches and Poverty

In the book Need is our Neighbor Byron Johnson describes four views of economics held by Christians (1966, p. 107-119).

- 1) The Pessimistic View says that in banishing Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden, God condemned people to a life of hard labor and scarcity of material goods (Gen. 3:17-19). There will never be enough for all until the second coming of Christ.
- 2) The Deterministic View believes God has determined who will be rich and poor. This is reinforced by belief in the "will of Allah", karma, "luck," and "God's will." Thomas Malthus in 1790 predicted the rich-poor gap would widen and population would grow faster than food supply and that this trend is inevitable (Mt. 25:29)
- 3) The Ascetic View sees poverty as good and affluence as evil. Jesus commended the poor (Lk. 6:20) and warned of the dangers of wealth (Mt. 6:19-21, 19:21). Gurus, monks, priests, and nuns are all honored for their unselfish, non-acquisitive attitudes (see also Deut. 7 & 8 and 1 Tim. 6:9-10).
- 4) The Optimistic View. In the Old Testament, wealth has dangers, but it is still a sign of God's will and blessing. The rich should help the poor by sharing their wealth (Deut. 15:7-8; Mt. 25:31-46). God desires abundant life for all (John 10:10).

### Opinion Poll

Use the following chart to find out what people in your project or neighborhood believe most:

**Insert Chart – pg 187**



### Describing Poverty Today

Descriptions of poverty are myriad. In India and Bangladesh every day the newspapers, radio, and television tell the plight of some section of the population. The concern in this study is to focus on the causes of poverty for millions of the world's people. Patrick Kenans summarizes the problem in these words:

It is the exclusion of low-income people (from the broader social and economic participation which is open to others) when this exclusion is not voluntary on their part which we define as the essence of poverty in the "Report to Canadian Government" 1971.

The poor are disadvantaged:

- a) in the labor market,
- b) in the consumer market,
- c) in access to credit,
- d) in benefits from schools,
- e) in quality of housing,
- f) in treatment in law courts.

(1974, p. 88-90)

Jacob Vines in Development and Society gives five common definitions of underdevelopment (Novak & Lechaman, 1964, p. 117-130):

1. Low ratio of population to area.
2. Lacking capital.
3. Low industrial output to total output and industrial population to total population.
4. Low per capita income
5. A country with good potential to use more capital resources and labor and raise its per capita income.

David Milward comes to six conclusions about the causes of and solutions to poverty.

1. The way our world operates is basically unjust; it discriminates against the poor and underprivileged and denies them an equitable share of resources.
2. This system is deeply entrenched and is not seriously challenged. It depends for survival on its acceptance by the majority; and most people even its victims, do accept it, if only passively.
3. An interlocking set of confidence-mechanisms holds the system together, distributes its benefits to the rich and privileged, and locks the poor into their own poverty.

4. The major hope for fundamental change lies in transforming the way people – in particular the poor and excluded – feel about the system by eroding their confidence in its mechanisms. This is inevitably a long-term task.
5. Good and services, however, can be redistributed more equitably in favor of the poor without overturning the system, through action directed at its pressure points.
6. The only way to ensure that poverty planning reduces poverty is for the poor themselves to participate in the planning. (1977, p. 56)

Apply these perceptions to your social context.

### Measuring Poverty: How Poor are the Poor?

In the Indian papers in January 1984 an announcement was made on the news page and in the cartoon column. India, according to the latest World Development Report, had the dubious distinction of being the sixth poorest country in the world and ,except for Laos, the other four countries at the bottom of the economic ladder were all her neighbors. Measured in per capita GNP the rankings were:

Bhutan & Laos	USD	\$80
Bangladesh		\$140
Nepal		\$150
Burma		\$190
India		\$260

On the same scale most western countries averaged more than US \$10,000 per capita. The miracle is that the poor somehow manage to keep living. If the average annual income in the Indian subcontinent is the equivalent of just one week's wages in the west, the logical conclusion is that people must starve for months each year. However, that is not borne out in reality. It is important to know how the per capita figures are calculated.

In calculating the gross national product few countries can collect all the data necessary to produce accurate figures. One limitation in India is that only ten percent of the people pay any tax and it is widely conceded that up to 50% of the money circulating in the country is "black money," this is, undeclared income. Furthermore, produce grown for a family's own consumption and products exchanged as gifts can't be calculated. Where the data ends, guesstimates are made.

The second major disadvantage of this type of comparison is that all currencies are converted into USD equivalents at the current rate of exchange. The fluctuations of the US dollar and local currencies can therefore alter the ratings considerably. On the latest GNP figures the ratios are 50 to 1 for India and 75 to 1 for Bangladesh and the USA.

A better scale for making comparisons is called the Purchasing Power Parity formula. This compares what money can buy in India, with what it costs to live elsewhere. On 1975 figures this reduces the discrepancy between India and the USA from 40 to 1 to 14 to 1. The international poverty line, then , was calculated at US \$75 per annum. On the GNP figures, 359 million people were below the standard line where adequate life could not be sustained. Estimated according to Purchasing Power Parity, this figure dropped to 180 million.

A third method of measurement of how people are surviving is the "Physical Quality of Life Indicator." This measures the performance of countries in meeting basic needs: literacy, infant mortality rate, and life expectancy are all calculated, and together scored as a percentage. On that scale, Afghanistan is the most desperate country in the world with a score of 18 percent. Zambia and Saudi Arabia, because very few women there can read or write, comes next. Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, and Iraq all scored below 50 percent. All western countries score over 90 percent.

Calculations of GNP and PPP tend to measure income, so interest and dividends from stocks and shares, etc., are included. They do not calculate wealth, therefore the values of houses, cars, videos and other luxuries are excluded. So what do the figures really say? Do they convey any truth at all? Indeed, they are useful for pointing out general trends and conditions.

On all scales, countries in the Indian subcontinent fare badly. The worst interpretation of the figures makes Indians 40 times worse off than Americans. By the best calculations they are twice as poor in socio-economic terms. It is not surprising then, that the poor are everywhere: on the streets of the cities and in the mud and thatch huts of villages. South American nations do not appear at the bottom of international scales because, while the disparity between the rich and the poor may be greater than in Asia, the basic income is higher. The rural peasants and urban squatters suffer from relative poverty – they don't get a fair share of the national cake. In India many suffer from absolute poverty – they get so little they are in the process of dying, not living.

This surely must be a situation of concern to the God who rescued a nation from slavery and whose spokesmen denounced oppression. Should it not be the concern of Christians today too? (Source: M. Hardman, lecture at RUHSA, Tamil Nadu, 1984)

### The Prophets: Spokesmen for the Poor

It is important to be aware of what the biblical prophets said about injustice in their societies. Look up and summarize the following references. Amos 2:7, 4:1, 5:11, 5:12, 8:4-6; Joel 3:2, Isaiah 1:23, 10:1-2, 41:17, 58:6-10; Jeremiah 5:28, Ezekiel 22:29; Micah 2:2, 3:11, 6:10-11, 7:3; Zephaniah 3:1, 3:4.

### God and the Poor

Is God biased in favor of the poor?: Ronald Sider in Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger (1977, p. 54-77) comes to the following conclusions.

- a) God is not partial. He loves each person He has created, weak and disadvantaged or strong and fortunate. Because He is impartial, His actions contrast with those of human societies which are often sinful and unconcerned for the suffering. Therefore from a human perspective He may appear biased.
- b) God is not neutral. He is on the side of the poor because He opposes oppression and neglect of the needy. He also opposes extremes of wealth and poverty.
- c) God opposes the rich when they oppress or fail to share with the poor. Salvation for the rich includes repentance of economic selfishness so that they are no longer worshipers of things. For this community this releases resources for the upliftment of the poor.
- d) In Jesus, God identified with the poor. Jesus was the friend of the poor because He lived

among them, loved them, ministered to them, shared their lifestyle, never accumulated possessions, died for them.

e) The poor are the focus of God's mission at key points in history. Examples include: the slaves in Egypt freed at the Exodus, the refugees in Babylon restored to their land, and the rural poor in Galilee whom Jesus taught and healed.

State at least 3 specific actions the church can take to demonstrate and share God's perspective and concern for the poor.

### Conclusion

A church notice board recently carried this statement:

How can we live in God's world and claim to be God's people and let half of His children starve...

AND NOT ANGER GOD

How can we live in God's world and claim to be God's people and let hundreds of millions remain illiterate...

AND NOT ANGER GOD?

How can we live in God's world and claim to be God's people and observe hundreds of millions treated as inferiors...

AND NOT ANGER GOD

How can we live in God's world and claim to be God's people and not tell three billion lost people about God's Son, our Savior...

AND NOT ANGER GOD

The early church father St. Ambrose would agree. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century A.D. He admonished the rich:

You are not making a gift of your possessions to the poor person. You are handing over to him what is his. For what has been given in common for the use of all, you have abrogated to yourself. The world is given to all and not only to the rich. (Kenans, 1974, p. 6)

What then should be done for the liberation of the poor from want, and the rich from selfishness and greed, and for the reconciliation of both into one brotherhood?

Indian church leader and theologian Geevarghese Mar Osthathios suggests a strategy for action. Make a prayer response to this plan.

a) We must live simply that the poor may simply live (1 Tim 6:6-8, 1 Pet. 3:13)

b) Enact regulations for capital formation for jobs for all. Let the right to work have precedence over the right to accumulate wealth.

c) Stop the production of luxury goods till the basic necessities are produced

for all the people of the world

d) Boycott the goods produced by the exploiting transnational corporations and produce substitutes locally for self-reliance.

e) Study the Bible afresh to discern the theology of a classless society in it.

f) Limit the land and wealth of each person and redistribute the extra for the landless and the penniless of each country.

g) Make economic sharing a prerequisite for Eucharistic sharing (1 Cor. 11:20-22)

h) Make a 'clear option in favor of the oppressed and the poor' and change their weakness to power until the powerful are ready to be reconciled.

i) Let the church promote 'holy living' associated with simplicity, piety, and devotion and give eschatological hope to her members.

j) Do everything possible to be Good Samaritans, but also try to convert the robbers on the Jericho Road.

k) Condition the theological seminaries and mission training centers to produce leaders of the caliber of Monsignor Oscar Arnulfo Romero.

l) Organize prayer cells and fasting groups praying for liberation and reconciliation (1983, p. 87)

# TRANSFORMATION: THE WISDOM LITERATURE

## STUDY 7: PERSPECTIVES ON POVERTY

### The Context of Wisdom

In the Old Testament there are five sections: 1) the Pentateuch, 2) the History books, 3) Wisdom Literature, 4) the Prophets, 5) the Apocalyptic Writers. This study covers the third of these five sections. Included in the study are: a) Job, b) Psalms, c) Proverbs, d) Ecclesiastes, and e) Song of Solomon. These five books form the middle section of modern Bibles and the main authors of this literature are Job, David and Solomon.

### The Contribution of Wisdom

The wisdom literature contrasts with the law and the prophets, history, and eschatology. Law defines what is right and wrong and attaches penalties to illegal actions. The prophets combined the call to spiritual renewal with the demand for social justice. History describes what has been while eschatology dreams of what might be. Wisdom looks at life and interprets it according to what works and what lasts. In the opening chapters of Proverbs the twin aims of wisdom are noted as knowledge of God and justice in society. This means of achieving wisdom are discipline and sharing (Pr. 1:2-3, 7 ; 2:9, 6:23, 3:27-28, 8:20, 9:10). In contrast the foolish person is greedy, selfish, and does not seek God. Wisdom therefore has both a religious and an ethical dimension. It is this latter aspect which this study highlights. It is common to read the book of Job to study the meaning of suffering and the Psalms for devotional reflection and inspiration but both also emphasize the ethical requirements of a just God.

### Job – The Rich Man Who Became Poor

In the opening two chapters of this book, Satan is allowed to control Job's circumstances and reduces him from the richest man in the East to the poorest. Job responds with some remarkable statements of faith: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised" (1:23). In response to his wife's advice to, "curse God and die," he says: "Shall we accept good from God and not trouble? (2:10).

The second level on which Job's life is judged is his behavior. His comforters begin by recognizing that he has not lived for himself alone: "Think how you have strengthened feeble hands. Your words have supported those who stumble; you have strengthened feeble knees" (4:3). Later they accuse him of the opposite actions (22:6-10) but Job maintains that he will pass the behavior test just as he passed the belief test (23:10). It is those who do not trust in God who exploit the poor (4:24). Job's final appeal before God and man is made in chapter 31. As he summed up his life and defended his actions, Job made three personal and ten social statements.

#### Personal

1. I have been correct in my believe – v. 5
2. I have been upright in my behavior – v. 9
3. I have no hidden sins to confess – v. 33

## Social

1. I have treated my servants justly – v. 13
2. I have been generous to the poor – v. 16
3. I have cared for the orphans – v. 17
4. I have clothed the naked – v. 19
5. I have not exploited the weak – v. 21
6. I have not boasted about my wealth – v. 24, 26
7. I have not rejoiced at my enemies' misfortune – v. 29
8. I have fed both servants and strangers – v. 31-32
9. I have cared for my land – v. 38
10. I have rewarded my tenant farmers – v. 39

Read this chapter and note the points Job makes. See also chapter 29:12-17. What conclusions can be drawn from the evidence Job presents?

When God passes judgment on people will it be mostly according to a) what they believed? b) what they have done? c) equally to what they have believed and done? Is the basis of judgment the same for rich and poor or are there differences?

## David – The Poor Man Who Became Rich

When David was a teenager and the youngest in his family he was not always invited to important family events, but left tending the sheep. This was certainly the situation Samuel found when he went to anoint one of Jesse's sons as Israel's second king. Yet David was chosen by God and from lowly beginnings became the most powerful man in the land.

He became strong:

- a) Spiritually ("From the day of his anointing on, the Spirit of the Lord came upon David in power." 1 Sam 16:13)
- b) Militarily ("David triumphed over Goliath with a stone and a sling." 1 Sam. 17:50), (They sang: 'Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands.' 1 Sam. 29:5)
- c) Politically ("David grew stronger and stronger, while the house of Saul grew weaker and weaker." 2 Sam 3:1), ("Everything David did pleased the people." 2 Sam. 3:36)
- d) Economically ("Now Hiram King of Tyre sent messengers to David along with logs and carpenters and stonemasons, and they built a palace for David." 2 Sam. 5:11)
- e) Socially ("I will make your name great like the names of the greatest men on the earth." 2 Sam 7:9).

David's kingship is summed up in the words, "David reigned over all Israel, doing what was just and right for all his people" (2 Sam. 8:15). When David writes his thoughts and prayers he focuses on the dual themes of worship and justice. Both are linked. The theme of justice in the Psalms is briefly examined here. Fill in the blank spaces.

a) God is just.

7:11 "God is a righteous judge."

9:16 "The Lord is known by His justice."

11:7 "The Lord is righteous, He loves justice."

33:5 "The Lord loves righteousness and justice."

45:6 "Your throne, O God will last forever and ever; a scepter of justice will be the scepter of

your kingdom."

67:4

69:33 "The Lord hears the needy."

89:14 "Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne."

b) Justice is the best policy and pleases God

37:28 "The Lord loves the just."

41:1 "Blessed is he who has regard for the weak."

82:3

82:4

106:3 "Blessed are they who maintain justice, who constantly do what is right."

112:9 "Good will come to him who conducts his affairs with justice."

119:121 "I have done what is righteous and just."

c) God acts to bring justice in human society

10:17 "You hear, O Lord, the desire of the afflicted; you encourage them and listen to their cry, defending the fatherless and the oppressed."

35:10 "Who is like you, O Lord? You rescue the poor from those who rob them."

37:6 "He will make your righteousness to shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun."

68:5

72:4 "He will defend the afflicted among the people and save the children of the needy. He will crush the oppressor."

103:6 "The Lord works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed."

113:7 "He raised the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap."

140:12

d) Human society is marred with injustice.

14:3 "All have turned aside, they have together become corrupt."

58:1 "There is none who does good, not even one."

58:2

94:5 "The proud crush your people, O Lord, they oppress your inheritance. They slay the widow and the alien, they murder the fatherless."

109:16 "The evil man hounded to death the poor and the needy and the broken-hearted."

e) God will judge all in justice

9:8 "He will judge the world in righteousness. He will govern the peoples with justice."

96:13 "He comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the people in his truth."

98:9

99:1 "The Lord reigns, let the nations tremble."

99:4 "The king is mighty; He loves justice – you have established equity; in Jacob you have done what is right and just."

102:7 "He will respond to the prayer of the destitute. HE will not despise their plea."

Read Psalm 15 and note the requirements for dwelling with God. Why do the Psalms link worship and justice? Quote a teaching of Jesus which makes the same link.

Studying the life of David reveals that he did do some unjust things. The most graphic



example is his killing of Uriah to cover up for his adultery with Bathsheba. The consequences were that the illegitimate child died and David was rebuked and reprimanded before the prophet Nathan and the Lord.

### Solomon – The Rich Man Who Became Richer

In contrast to Job and David, Solomon never experienced poverty. He grew up in a palace, built a grander palace, and entertained kings, queens, and wise men from throughout the world (1 Kings 10:29-34). He became the richest man in the world (1 Kings 10). Among his possessions were 12,000 horses, 14,000 chariots, a fleet of ships, the most beautiful and expensive throne in the world and an annual income of approximately 1,000 talents of gold (about 20 metric tonnes).

When at the beginning of his reign God appeared to Solomon and offered him anything he wanted, Solomon asked for wisdom to be able to govern effectively and justly (1 Kings 3:7-12). The first evidence of this ability was in the judgment about which of two prostitutes was the mother of the live child. It was also shown in the 3,000 proverbs, the 1,005 songs, and the botanical studies and zoological lectures attributed to him (3:26-34). Solomon's otherwise actions included building a temple for God before building a temple for himself, bringing peace and prosperity to the country, and improving working conditions for his laborers by giving them two months at home after every month at work in the city away from their families (1 Kings 5:14)

Solomon showed that wisdom is a gift – it was given to him by God; an ability – he used and developed his gift; a service – he used his wisdom to help others; and a heritage – he recorded his insights. Solomon's wisdom is recorded in Proverbs. His thoughts on poverty and justice include the following verses. Fill in the verses below. Mark them with a star (\*) if they suggest that the poor are responsible for their own poverty and a cross (x) if others are considered responsible.

2:6-8 "The Lord gives wisdom...victory to the upright...shields the blameless – guides the just...protects the faithful."

6:16-19 "There are six things that the Lord hates – haughty eyes, a lying tongue, a hand that sheds innocent blood, a wicked heart, false witnesses, quarrelers"

8:20 "I walk in the way of righteousness, along the paths of justice."

10:4 "Lazy hands make a man poor, but diligent hands bring wealth."

11:1

11:24 "One man gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly but comes to poverty. A generous man will prosper."

11:25

12:5 "The plans of the righteous are just."

13:11 "Dishonest money dwindles away, but he who gathers money little by little makes it grow."

13:23 "A poor man's field may produce abundant food, but injustice sweeps it away."

14:20

14:23 "All hard work brings profit, but mere talk leads only to poverty."

16:8 "Better a little with righteousness than much gain with injustice."

16:11 "Honest scales and balances are from the Lord."

16:19 "Better to be lowly in spirit and among the oppressed than to share plunder with the proud."

17:23

18:5 "It is not good to be partial to the wicked or to deprive the innocent of justice."

18:9 "He who is slack in his work is brother to one who destroys."

19:1 "Better a poor man whose walk is blameless than a fool whose lips are perverse."

19:17

20:10

20:13 "Do not love sleep or you will grow poor."

20:17 "Food gained by fraud tastes sweet to a man but he ends up with a mouth full of gravel."

20:23

21:3 "To do what is right and just is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice."

21:5

21:13

21:15 "When justice is done, it brings joy to the righteous but terror to evildoers."

21:17 "He who loves pleasure will become poor, whoever loves wine and oil will never be rich."

21:21

21:26 "The righteous give without sparing."

22:2

22:7 "The rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender."

22:9 "A generous man will himself be blessed, for he shares his food with the poor."

22:16

22:22-23 "Do not exploit the poor because they are poor and do not crush the needy in court, for the Lord will take up their case and plunder those who plunder them."

24:28 "Do not testify against your neighbor without cause."

25:21 "If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; if he is thirsty, give him water to drink."

28:5 "Evil men do not understand justice, but those who seek the Lord understand it fully."

28:6 "Better a poor man whose walk is blameless than a rich man whose ways are perverse."

28:8

28:19 "He who works his land will have abundant food, but the one who chases fantasies will have his fill of poverty."

28:23

29:2 "When the righteous thrive the people rejoice; when the wicked rule the people groan."

29:4 "By justice a king gives a country stability, but one who is greedy for bribes tears it down."

29:7

29:14 "If a king judges the poor with fairness, his throne will always be secure."

30:8 "Give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread."

30:9 "Otherwise I may have too much and disown you and say 'Who is the Lord?' or I may become poor and steal and so dishonor the name of God."

30:14 "There are those who devour the poor from the earth, the needy from among mankind."

31:5 "Kings must not deprive all the oppressed of their rights."

31:8

31:9 "Speak up and judge fairly, defend the rights of the poor and needy."

Here are two comments on Proverbs. Choose a partner, then each person should pick one of the two comments and explain what it means and how it applies today to your partner.

It is said that Solomon wrote the Song of Solomon when he was young, Ecclesiastes when he was old, and Proverbs in his middle age. It seems that Proverbs is the in-between book, between earth and heaven, and an attempt to say how to live an earthly life without ignoring heavenly values. Of course, Solomon, to whom are attributed many of the sayings in Proverbs, was a very rich king. Can a rich man ever be sensitive to God's partiality to the poor? A greater than Solomon is necessary for that (Together, April 1984, p. 33)

The second comment:

The context of the Proverbs is the overarching mandate to do that which is wise, prudent, and skillful. It is also to pursue that which is right and fair and just. Thus in Proverbs we find legitimacy for the so-called "middle-class" values of hard work, thrift, and honesty (which could translate into a community development project, for example, to promote village self-sufficiency). Here too in Proverbs is strongly worded theological legitimacy for promoting social justice (which may mean taking some actions against oppressors). By some Christian activists, these strategies have been regarded as antithetical to each other. In fact, they are the complimentary halves of a pincer movement, which has as its goal the ensuring of enough for all. (Together, April 1984, p. 33)

As a group, brainstorm and write down as many contemporary proverbs as possible which say something about poverty in contemporary society.

#### The Wisdom of Asia

Undoubtedly the most influential figure in the history of the Indian sub-continent this century was Mahatma Gandhi. Francis Winters in Politics and Ethics describes Gandhi's approach.

Each generation has its own Socrates, however, and our own Socrates was Gandhi. With an essentially identical approach to truth. The Mahatma articulated an approach to politics which consisted in staging confrontations which would require the opponent to face the truth in himself. From such dialogue or confrontations would emerge truth from the situation. Although Gandhi is best known for his political achievements and almost equally identified with a philosophy of non-violence, it is important to realize that for Gandhi himself the basic issue was truth. What actions of his own or his followers would reveal the truth of the situation? The answer was always: those actions which would engage the adversary in continuing confrontation without destroying him. For this reason, Gandhi felt required to advocate non-violence, since destroying an opponent, who possessed his own segment of the truth, would preclude the possibility of discovering that truth. At the heart of Ahimsa (*non-violence*) is the search for truth through dialogue (1975, p. 37)

#### Meditation

This study concludes with a meditation on the most famous chapter of the Old Testament. Each student should attempt to translate it into his own language or to write a similar

reflection on a verse or passage of scripture.

### The Development Worker's Psalm

#### A Paraphrase and Reflection on Psalm 23

The Lord is my example, and my animator, I shall not fail.

He leads me into the conflict zone where injustice and oppression, ignorance and fear dominate the lives of the world's poor. He gives me courage to challenge the oppressors and strength to attempt the seemingly impossible task of eradicating both the causes and effects of poverty.

With His spirit as my strength I can shrug off the threat of violence against me, and immerse myself in the people's struggle against evil and death in its myriad forms. I know that together we can win our rights, develop our skills, enhance our environment, and build our community.

Constant criticisms will not deter me, for the champion of the poor has called me to care for His suffering children. I will challenge the comfortable to share their resources and counsel the poor to put their faith and hope in God, whose constant, self-giving love reaches into their mud and thatch huts or sidewalk shelters.

Now they may struggle to survive one day at a time, but in God's kingdom they will reign forever. Now they may be the victims of a thousand injustices, but then they will be treated as precious sons and daughters of the sovereign creator of life. Now they may be imprisoned in the slums of the city, or in the impoverished rural village where the low caste have no voice and no power. Then they will be free, and never again will they be treated as worthless and useless. They will take their place alongside the famous and the rich, alongside the educated and the strong, for through faith they are equally citizens of heaven.

So amidst the pain and the paradox of a hurting world, I seek to share the truth, and the love, and the presence of God, so that those who are poor might catch a vision of God's purpose for their lives and experience in this life, the glory and reality of the world to come. (Bellingham, 1985)

## TRANSFORMATION: THE ISSUE OF CULTURE

### STUDY 8: DISCOVERING ROOTS AND RETAINING IDENTITY

#### Introduction

One remarkable feature of the Jewish people is the extent to which they have been able to retain their cultural identity over the centuries when they have been scattered throughout the world. From the time of the calling of Abraham until the formation of the new state of Israel in 1948, a period of approximately 4,000 years, they were as often out of, as in their historical homeland. The Old Testament tells of their early experiences in exile. First the northern kingdom was conquered and its people taken captive in 722 B.C. Then Jerusalem was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 B.C. And its people became involuntary refugees. A remnant remained in the land, but it was the group who went into exile who best maintained the faith and traditions of the nation.

In 156 B.C. Judas Maccabeus refused to worship a foreign God and led a revolt which gave the Jews 100 years of independence. At the time of Jesus, the Jews were in Israel under the domination of Rome. However, Jesus predicted that the temple in Jerusalem, built by Herod, would be destroyed and in 70 A.D. The Romans turned the city and the temple into a desolate ruin. So for more than 3,000 out of 4,000 years the Jews have been exiled from, or captives in, the land of Israel. Yet throughout history they have maintained a strong identity as a people.

From your knowledge of Jewish history and customs, suggest reasons why they have been so successful in maintaining their culture.

#### What is Culture?

Look up the dictionary definition and list the main characteristics of culture.

Social anthropologists offer the following descriptions...

Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs, and any other capabilities or habits acquired by man as a member of society.

Culture is a functioning and organizing system.

Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional ideas and especially their attached values.

Part of culture consists of norms for or standards of behavior. Another part consists in ideologies justifying or rationalizing certain selected ways of behavior.

Culture is a way of life and the content of relations between people. Culture emphasizes the component of accumulated resources, immaterial as well as

material which the people inherit, employ, transmute, add to, and transmit.

The Process-Pattern theory of culture looks for the common elements in the beliefs and actions of communities. The Structural-Functional theory emphasizes social structures as indicators and expressions of culture. Read the above definitions several times to grasp their meaning, then briefly state five points about culture in your own words.

### Learning About Culture

The key ingredients in the culture of a group are likely to be discovered in three areas.

1) The History of a People. Communities express their culture in stories about their origins and significant events in the past. The Israelites constantly referred back to past events and people. They often spoke of God as , "The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." God encouraged them to, "remember you were once slaves in Egypt and the Lord your God delivered you from bondage with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm." They spoke of "our father David" and the kings of Judah were described as walking in the footsteps of David or straying from them. The New Testament regularly quotes the ancient Hebrew scriptures and speaks of a new covenant, the first Adam and the second Adam, the old Israel and the new Israel. The sermons in the Book of Acts and the exploits of the faithful in Hebrews 11 make constant references to Israel's past – its history, its heroes, and its prophets.

### 2) Their Social and Religious Festivals

- a) The Passover initiated in Exodus 12 was the most important festival in the Hebrew year. This was preceded by the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Lev. 23:4-8)
- b) The First Fruit Festival celebrated God's provision of the land to them (Lev. 23:9-14)
- c) The Feast of Trumpets remembered the conquest of Jericho and the entry into Canaan (Lev. 23:26-32)
- d) The feast of Trumpets remembered the conquest of Jericho and the entry into Canaan (Lev. 23:26-32)
- e) On the Day of Atonement sacrifices were offered for the sins of the people (Lev. 23:26-32)
- f) Weekly Sabbaths were also rest and worship days (Lev. 23:3)

3) The Practices Surrounding the Milestones in Life. Jewish customs at birth, puberty, and adulthood focus especially on the male members of the community.

- a) Circumcision took place on the eighth day after birth (Gen. 21:4, Ex. 12:48-49).
- b) At age 12 Jewish boys could participate in temple worship (Lk. 2:42). Today at age 13 they perform the Bar Mitzvah ceremony and become recognized as adults. Girls have a similar ceremony on their 12<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- c) On attaining 30 years of age a Jewish man from a priestly family could become a rabbi.
- d) At death Israelites were buried in family burial grounds, often caves in hillsides.

Select a people group and write a paragraph about their history, festivals, and passages-of-life practices. Now compare the people group you have chosen, or your own community, and the Hebrew people in the cultural graph in Figure 8.1

### Stories and Songs, Poetry and Proverbs

Culture is also expressed in stories, songs, poems, and proverbs. Some Hebrew examples are.

a) Famous Old Testament stories including Noah and the flood, Samson and the Philistines, and David and Goliath. Every Hebrew would learn these from childhood

b) The Song of Moses begins: "I will sing unto the Lord for He is highly exalted. The horse and its rider He has hurled into the sea" (Ex. 15).

Other songs were authored by Deborah (Jdg. 5), David (Psalms), Solomon (Song of Songs), Mary (Lk. 2), Zechariah (Lk. 1).

c) Poems: include Job, Psalms, Ecclesiastes, and Lamentations and many of the prophetic writings. For example,

I rescued the poor who cried for help  
And the fatherless who had none to assist him.  
The man who was dying blessed me;  
I made the widow's heart sing.  
I put on righteousness as my clothing;  
Justice was my robe and my turban. (Job. 29:12-14)

d) Most biblical proverbs are contained in the book of Proverbs, a collection of wise sayings gathered by Solomon. Some examples are:

"Honor the Lord with your wealth and your barns will be filled to overflowing."  
(Prov. 3:9-10)

"Go to the ant you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise!" (6:6)

"Men do not despise a thief if he steals to satisfy his hunger when he is starving." (6:30)

"A poor man's fields may produce abundant food but injustice sweeps it away."  
(13:23)

"Dishonest money dwindles away, but he who gathers money little by little makes it grow." (13:11)

"An honest answer is like a kiss on the lips." (24:26)

"Finish your outside work and get your fields ready; after that, build your house." (24:27)

From your own community you are studying record some stories, songs, poems, and proverbs. Write them down and share them with the group.

Of the two major approaches to the study of culture, does a comparison of stories, songs, poems, and proverbs represent the process-pattern theory or the structural-functional theory?

### Relationships

Much of the study of culture has concentrated on the kinship network of the community. IN small-scale societies kinship exceeds any other factor governing social interaction. The basic kinship distinctions are according to sex and generation, and every language contains terms such as mother, father, son, daughter, grandfather, grandmother, granddaughter, grandson. Other terms refer to more distant relatives such as aunts, uncles, and cousins. Relatives may also be distinguished according to age, usually with older brothers being given greater

responsibilities and privileges.

In modern societies with high specialization and more complex technology, the relationship network extends beyond kinship boundaries more frequently. Peer friendships and professional associations may become more significant than blood ties.

Is the study of kinship relationships an example of the process-pattern or structural-functional approach to the study of culture?

### Retaining Culture

A return to the story of the Jews in exile sheds some light on how they managed to retain their culture while scattered and persecuted. Some key elements seem to be:

1) They had a holy book. When Mohammed observed the Jews and the Christians he concluded they were strong, united, and progressive because they were "people of the book." The rediscovery of the book of the Covenant in the reign of Josiah led to one of Israel's greatest reforms (2 Kings 22-23). The dedication of a section of the community to the reading, understanding, and interpretation of the law – the Levites (Scribes and Pharisees in Jesus' time), meant the Bible was preserved and preached. They could carry the words of scriptures with them in their hands and minds wherever they went.

2) They had pride in their past and hope for the future. The nation of Israel was established from very humble beginnings. "A wandering Aramean was my father" (Deut. 26:5). "Remember you were once slaves in Egypt" (Ex. 23:9). Yet they became strong and prosperous. "The Lord brought you out of Egypt by His presence and His great strength, to drive out before you nations greater and stronger than you. And to bring you into their land to give it to you for your inheritance" (Deut. 4:27-28). The provision of God's help and blessings in the past was a constant encouragement (see Deut. 3:24, 4:6-8, 33-40). In exile the prophets and people remembered God's promise to restore Jerusalem. As it was being destroyed, Jeremiah purchased land there and landless and leaderless, the Jews clung to the messianic vision of the future golden age of peace and prosperity.

3) They celebrated many festivals. Culture is not just a set of beliefs and values. These find expression in cultural and religious functions. The Old Testament defines not only the occasion and nature of the festivals but with great detail describes the rituals of sacrifices and celebration which should take place. While for Christians the descriptions of the temple rituals may seem tedious, for the Israelites they were the solid core of their religious and cultural distinctiveness. The Jews have always had people who dedicated themselves to the remembrance and observance of these customs.

4) They had a strong family structure. In the triangle of relationships between people and God, society, and land, the family was the mediating unit (Figure 8.2). The core of the family was grandparents, parents, and their children but it also included servants and extra orphaned and widowed members, foreign residents, and guests. The strength of the family was that it was a micro unit so even in exile it survived and provided protection and guidance for its members

5) They had a high view of God. Wherever the Jews went they were tempted to mix their



religious beliefs with the local customs but always found that their understanding of God was of a higher order. So Shadrack, Meshack, and Abednego, and Daniel in Babylon, Esther in Persia, and even the Hebrew servants in Naaman's household and Nebuchadnezzar's palace remembered and testified to the superior power of Yahweh, the God of Israel and of the world.

6) They placed value on cultural education. When the law was given to the people Moses said:

These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands, and binds them on your foreheads. Write them on the door frames of your houses and on your gates. (Deut 6:6-9, 11:18-20)

Every parent in Israel was commissioned to be a teacher of the traditions of the nation to their children.

7) They had a land to relate to. The lament of the Psalmist was, "By the rivers of Babylon, we sat and wept when we remembered Zion. How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" (Ps. 137:1. 4). Yet even there they were not abandoned by God. "While I was among the exiles by the Kebar River, the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God" (Ez. 1:1). The exile forced them to create the synagogue system – worship places wherever they lived rather than continued reliance on the central temple in Jerusalem. Yet all through the centuries of exile to all corners of the earth Jews would end the celebration of Passover with the words, "Next year in Jerusalem!" They were given the land, and their culture valued and looked toward this land as a focus of their hopes and God's promises wherever they were.

Take the above headings or other headings more appropriate to your community or the people-group you are working with and write a similar description of cultural strength which have enabled them to retain their identity through time.

### Culture Change

Social anthropologists identify the following factors as primary causes of change in culture.

1) Change in ecology or geography. Culture is an adaptation to and integration with the environment. Where the environment changes over time or where the people move to a new environment, cultural expressions and beliefs are also likely to change.

2) Contact with other societies. The impact of alternative beliefs, values, habits, and rituals changes cultures except for very conservative groups and in relation to the most private or deeply held convictions.

3) Evolutionary change within a society. While culture is the heritage from the past – received rather than invented – it is not static. AS a living form it is likely to be modified gradually over time in response to new issues and conditions.

4) Dramatic and traumatic events. The cultural beliefs and practices of Israel were shaped

by the Exodus and the wilderness experiences. Similarly the founding of other religious traditions, i.e. Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, have created new cultural forms reflecting the character, beliefs, or actions of their founders.

On a scale of 1 to 10 rate how strongly you feel the above factors have shaped the culture of Israel, your community, and your target people-group (Figure 8.3). Add a brief explanation of your rating.

### Dimensions of Culture

To develop a holistic understanding of culture we need to relate its various aspects. All cultures have...

- a) An ideological dimension. Beliefs, ideas, and knowledge, including myths, legends, literature, philosophy, science.
- b) A sociological dimension. Interpersonal relationships expressed in patterns of collectives well as individual behavior, including social, political, and economic institutions.
- c) A technological and economic dimension. The instruments and techniques by which people interact with their environment. The means and tools of subsistence, production, and defense.
- d) The ecological dimension. The environment in which people live and which provides resources for them, conditions their culture, and is affected by their actions.
- e) The time dimension. People have a historical past which influences the present and shapes their worldview.

A community is...

**DIAGRAM PG 216**

Describe these features in your community.

### Issues in Culture Today

Studying the culture of the Hebrew people raises several issues including...

1) One Culture or Many? In many nations, especially India the world's largest democracy, a key question is how to integrate the many ethnic, language, and religious groups into one nation. The Babel story in Genesis 11 suggests that different languages and cultures were God's idea and that diversity is better than conformity. At the end of history all the nations will come and present the gift of their cultures to God (Rev. 21:24 & 26)

Does Christianity have a distinctive cultural form? Does culture determine politics in your society today?

2) Impact of Migrations. Modern migrations take several forms.

- a) Tourism – the movement of millions of people around the world every year often causing significant changes for them and the people and places they visit.
- b) Refugees – wars, war, or ideological conflict continues to produce large groups of refugees who find sanctuary in other lands where they are assimilated or where they exist as dependents in camps.
- c) Resettlement – to even out population densities some governments have relocated large groups of people; for example from Java to Timor in Indonesia.
- d) Urbanization – the most constant movement in the developing countries is from rural areas to towns and cities.
- e) Migrant labor – in Europe and the Middle East large groups of people from other countries are employed on work contracts.

Have the above migratory patterns had an impact on the culture of your community? What have the main positive and negative effects been?

3) Culture as an Entry Point for the Gospel. In the paper "People Groups and Strategies for Mission," Vinay Samuel and Chris Sugden stress the need to discover and understand the world view of the people as a prerequisite for effective ministry. IN Bangladesh when witnessing groups began to use the religious terminology familiar to the Muslim community in place of the traditional Hindu terminology introduced by early missionaries, they found much less resistance to the Gospel. Some teachers also adopted the style of the *pir*, an itinerant holy man, and this too found ready listeners. The theorists insisted that if people only had to cross religious barrier, and not also a cultural barrier, they would believe in Jesus.

What events in the history and experience of the people you work with or your community link most naturally with the Gospel story?

Israel took three different attitudes to the cultures of their neighbors. Some beliefs and practices they condemned (idol worship), others they tolerated (interracial marriage), and others they endorsed (urban living). In your opinion, what in your community should fall into each category?

4) Cultural Sensitivity. Christians have often been branded as culture smashers because missionaries and colonizers have seen existing cultural customs as not neutral and something to be observed and preserved (the view of the social anthropologists) but as evil and therefore in need of transformation. In India there has always been a debate about whether renunciation of caste should be a prerequisite for conversion or baptism, or an issue for discipleship of believers within the church. In Africa the same questions are raised concerning polygamy.

Are non-Christian cultures controlled by Satan or under God's sovereignty?

Application

The importance of an understanding of culture is obvious from this study. This calls for three tasks.

- a) The task of deeply grasping the key features of the biblical worldview
- b) Discovering ways to structure our priorities, lives, and communities so biblical values are passed on to our children.
- c) The need to develop sensitivity to other cultures in order to communicate the Gospel in ways others can accept and understand.

### Development and Culture

This study concludes with a story about culture from South America.

One day an epidemic of pink-eye swept through the longhouse. Soon everybody had burning, running eyes. Bruce was ready to explode with frustration. In his medical kit was simple antibiotic that would tackle the disease, but the people wouldn't use it. Finally, desperate, Bruce touched a finger to a Motilone friend's eye, then to his own. In five days, he too had a raging case of pink eye. Then he went to the native healer.

'Auntie, can you please give me something for my eyes? They're burning,' he pleaded.

'Bruce, I wish I could help you,' she answered, "but I've tried every herb and chant I know and nothing works. I'm worn out.'

Bruce pulled a tube of ointment out of his back pocket. 'Well Auntie I do have some white man's medicine. I wonder if you would be willing to smear some on my eyes?' She complied. Bruce's pink-eye cleared up in a few days and he rushed back to the healer. 'Auntie, Look! You've cured my eyes!' She was impressed. 'Why don't you try this potion on some of the others?' Bruce added.

'Nothing lost,' thought the healer. She tried it and it worked. In three days she had cured everybody. As a result she began to listen to Bruce's health suggestions. She was willing to look through his primitive microscope and she marveled at the 'wiggling demons' that she had always known were responsible for disease. When the people periodically beat a long house to exorcise spirits, she was willing now to use disinfectants as well.

Within a few years the Motilones were running eight clinics. They were doing both the diagnoses and the treatments; they were giving the injections. Spanish-speaking settlers were streaming to the clinics by the thousands. (Adeney, 1984, p. 22)

Figure 8.1

Cultural  
Characteristic

Chosen Community/  
Own Community

Hebrew  
Community

1. History

a) Beliefs re:  
origin of the  
World

1. a) Created by God  
in 6 stages from nothing.  
Humans made in God's  
image.

b) Origin of  
community

b) Call and blessing of  
Abraham. Based on  
12 Tribes/sons of Jacob

c) Heroes of  
history

c) Abraham, Isaac, and  
Jacob. Moses and  
Joshua, Elijah, Elisha,  
Samuel, Esther, and  
Daniel.

d) Major  
historical  
Events

d) Calling of Abraham in  
approx. 1970 B.C. and  
the Exodus approx. 1290  
B.C.

King David's reign  
approx. 900 B.C.

Northern Kingdom  
conquered by Assyria  
in 721 B.C.

Southern kingdom  
conquered by Babylonians  
586 B.C.

Return from exile 444 B.C.

Judas Maccabeus revolt  
in 156 B.C.

Jesus 4 B.C. - 29 A.D.

Jerusalem destroyed by  
Romans 70 A.D.

Modern state of Israel

e) Current social and political leaders

f) Contemporary events shaping culture

g) Nature of future hope

## 2. Festivals

What,  
When,  
Where,  
How?

### 3) Rites of Passage.

a) Birth

formed 1948 A.D.

e) Shimon Peres – Prime Minister

Yehudi Menuin  
- Famous violinist

f) Memories of holocaust  
holocaust Military training for all. Conflict with Arab neighbors. Small population. High inflation  
Establishment of kibbutzim. Many political parties

g) Emergence of age of peace. Coming of Messiah. Possible battle with Arab neighbors

2). a) Passover recalls exodus event, at Easter in Jerusalem and Elsewhere. Pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Family feast, eat unleavened bread.

Feast of Tabernacles remembers wandering in the wilderness, law giving, and guidance of God. Sleep in temporary shelters.

First Fruits – To thank God for the good land, they offer the first of the harvest in worship.

3. a) Males circumcised eight days after birth.

b) Puberty

c) Marriage

d) Death

b) Bar Mitzvah ceremony.

c) Conducted by Rabbi in synagogue.

d) Belief in resurrection. Bodies are buried. Soul departs from body.

**Insert Figure 8.2 pg 222**

**Insert Figure 8.3**

## TRANSFORMATION: THE RECONSTRUCTION MODEL

### STUDY 9: REBUILDING CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

#### The Disaster

The story of the fall of Jerusalem is told in 2 Kings 25, 2 Chronicles 36:15-20, Jeremiah, and Lamentations. There it is written that the city was completely destroyed and its people totally deserted it. The Babylonians followed this strategy...

1. They surrounded the city and attacked it daily.
2. They cut off all access so the inhabitants slowly starved to death.
3. When the king and army broke the cordon they chased and captured them. The king's sons were killed before his eyes. Then he was blinded, chained, and led prisoner to Babylon.
4. The temple, palace, houses and all important buildings were burned to the ground.
5. The walls of the city were broken down.
6. Nearly all the people were exiled to Babylon; only a few of the poorest were left to till the fields and tend the vineyards.
7. All the valuable temple treasures were taken to Babylon.
8. The community leaders were executed.
9. The Babylonians appointed a puppet ruler.
10. When the local ruler was assassinated all the people fled to avoid Babylonian punishment.

From 2 Kings chapter 25, note the verses which describe the above events. Jeremiah chapters 39-41 and 52 tell the same story in more detail.

#### The Reasons

Jerusalem was not destroyed just because of Babylon's strategy and strength. Jeremiah gives additional reasons. Read the following passages to discover why Jerusalem fell. A) Jeremiah 34:8-22, b) Jeremiah 35:15a, c) Jeremiah 35:15b, 44:3-6, d) Jeremiah 36, e) Jeremiah 27:1-2, 27:6-10, f) Jeremiah 38:14-28, g) Jeremiah 44:9-10.

#### The Results

There were three dimensions of disaster.

- 1) The City Was Destroyed. "How deserted was the city, once so full of people," laments the prophet (Lam. 1:1). All her wealth was taken away (Lam. 1:10), all her buildings destroyed (Lam. 2:2-9).
- 2) Many People Died. As well as the leader killed by the Babylonians, hundreds in Jerusalem died of famine (Lam. 4:9). Not even children were spared – they were eaten by their own mothers (Lam. 4:10).
- 3) The Survivors Despaired. There was no joy left in their hearts, no hope in their minds, no strength in their bodies, no faith in their spirits. They felt that God had abandoned them completely.



There were consequences too for the ones who destroyed Jerusalem, for the Lord in His justice judged Babylon and all who helped her, so that she became a haunt of jackals, more desolate than Jerusalem, beyond repair. (Jer. 46-51).

For Jerusalem, however, there was the promise of restoration (Jer 33, Jer. 50:19, 2 Chron. 36:21-23). Read the passages noted.

### The Reconstruction

Seventy years were to pass before a plan was taken up to rebuild Jerusalem and restore its glory, its people, and its functions as a commercial, political, and religious center. The rebuilding was done in two stages, with the altar and the temple built under the leadership of Zerubbabel (Ezra 1-4). The walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt according to a plan conceived and executed by Nehemiah (Neh. 1-6). While this was happening, Ezra the priest and Haggai and Zechariah the prophets, inspired the people in their work and led them in worship.

This study examines the philosophy and strategy motivating each of these relief and development efforts, and relates them to community development efforts, and relates them to community development philosophy.

#### 1) Zerubbabel's Building Plan – Ezra

##### 1). The key features in his program were:

- it was a government scheme sanctioned by the king himself (1:2-7)
- It was a community program (1:3-6, 2:68-69)
- it involved 50,000 people (2:64-65).
- it was well planned (3:2)
- it was carried out with courage and joy (3:36, 3:10-11)
- it had a food-for-work component (3:7)
- they met with much opposition (4:1-5).
- the work stopped because of official disapproval (4:4-24)
- the work was again officially approved (5:6-8).
- it took many years to complete (5:13-16).
- wages were paid by the government (6:9-10).
- local leadership and management were used (6:25).
- good records and accountability were maintained (8:20-34)

#### 2) Nehemiah's Reconstruction Scheme – Nehemiah

- it began with research (1:2-3, 2:12-15).
- it was motivated by compassion (1:4).
- it was surrounded by prayer (1:4-11, 2:4).
- it had a sound strategy (2:5-9, 4:13-23).
- it faced opposition from local oppressors (2:10-19, 4:1-11, 6:1-14, 6:17-19).
- the community was involved (2:17-18).
- the work was shared (3:4-15).
- some nobles wouldn't do manual work (3:4).
- the people worked enthusiastically (4:6).
- it was motivated by a concern for social justice (5:1-13, 8:10).
- Nehemiah demonstrated servant leadership (5:14-19).

- it was carried through with courage and persistence (6:3-13).
- it was blessed by God (6:15-16).
- leaders of integrity were appointed (7:1-2, 13:13).
- the work was dedicated to God (12:27-43).
- the purpose of the work was spoiled by self-interest (12:4-11).

### Development Programs Today

The examples of Zerubbabel, Ezra, Nehemiah highlight many key issues in community development. They formed a vision and defined a goal. They assessed the need and developed a strategy. They involved the people in the reconstruction process. They attacked the opposition which arose. They cooperated with national and local leaders. They surrounded their efforts with prayer and worship.

The remainder of this study reflects on these issues in community development.

1) The Vision and the Goal. First briefly state a vision and community development goal of your organization.

One of the successful community development programs in India is in Tamil Nadu where the Rural Unit for Health and Social Affairs (RUHSA) conducts programs among the 100,000 people of K.V. Kuppam Block, Vellore. They insist a development plan must be: 1) adoptable, 2) acceptable, 3) accessible, 4) adjustable, 5) accountable, and 6) appropriate.

State how your plans meet these criteria. Did Zerubbabel's, Ezra's, and Nehemiah's plans have these features? In what way?

2) The Need and the Strategy. The rebuilding of Jerusalem has some features of a disaster relief response and some characteristics of a community development program.

One disaster response training manual lists the following states of reaction among disaster victims:

- a) Denial. Even in natural disaster regions few people really expect anything to happen to them. They believe the myth of community or personal immunity, or are fatalistic.
- b) Anticipation. When a disaster is known to be approaching there is sometimes paralysis but most often frantic preparation to reduce expected losses and to secure property.
- c) Impact. When the disaster hits, people typically go through a sequence of: fear; a feeling of isolation; an illusion of centrality; a realization of the scope of the disaster; spreading and believing rumors of extensive damage; an increase of love; a surge of energy; a sense of difference from outsiders; a focus on loss of life, then of property.

d) Aftermath. After the disaster has passed people may take some weeks or months to readjust. They are likely to express grief, or guilt if unaffected; to relive the experience or deny; to readjust; to criticize the helping agencies; and finally to rebuild. (Adapted from Disaster Response by John Bush, 1978, p. 129)

Which of these reactions did the people of Jerusalem experience? Discuss your ideas in the

group.

The procedural steps in a disaster-relief situation are:

1. Estimating the need by on-the-spot investigation.
2. Consulting all parties – community, government, other helping agencies.
3. Defining the target group.
4. Identifying clearly the organization's input.
5. Coordinating resources.
6. Mobilizing local Christian volunteers.
7. Involving the community.
8. Setting time schedules and objectives.
9. Ensuring accountability for money and goods.
10. Evaluating the program.
11. Withdrawing the organization and handing the work over to the community.
12. Moving from disaster relief to a community development approach. Tick any steps followed by Zerubbabel and Nehemiah. Are there things they did which are not mentioned on this list?

3) Involving the Community. Many development programs today realize like Nehemiah that the community itself is the key to successful community development and must be involved at all stages of planning on implementation. A diagram developed by the RUHSA, Tamil Nadu, India, places the community at the center of the development Process (Figure 9.1). To what extent is the community involved in the development projects you are involved in?

4 Dealing with Obstacles and Opposition. Arthur Simon of Bread for the World, which seeks to influence U.S. Government policy, identifies common obstacles to development. He says:

One internal obstacle to development is neglect of agriculture. Another is attachment to the status quo. Persons with wealth or power to preserve, corrupt officials, or merchants or poor people who fail to understand the causes of poverty and passively accept their lot in life may all resist needed changes. A third is poor allocation of resources: a capital-intensive industry, for example, when capital is scarce and labor abundant; in show-case development projects; or in excessive military spending. Other internal obstacles may stem from the period of colonialism, when systems of education, communications, transportation, commerce, and even food production were created for the purpose of exporting cheap raw materials or cash crops to the controlling country, not for local development. To reflect even a bit on these obstructions is to realize how difficult it is to overcome them.

Not all obstacles to development lie within the poor nations, however. Many are still imposed on them by the rich countries. These external obstacles, which also reflect the reluctance of those with advantages to give them up, include: 1) trade and investment practices that stack the deck against poor countries; 2) scarcity of genuine development assistance; and 3) "cultural colonialism" by which rich nations impose on poor countries growth-distorting values or systems, schools that prepare a few for college but leave the rest ill equipped to be better farmers or workers; or advertising that develops a craving for luxury products, from Cokes to cars, rather than for basic commodities.

These obstacles to development threaten to bury the poor world in a permanent sea of misery. They have to be dealt with candidly by both rich and poor nations through the adoption of positive alternatives (1984, p. 67)

In Bangladesh Dr. Clarence Maloney, a university lecturer and international development consultant, listed eight reasons why Bangladesh remains poor. They are:

1. Natural catastrophes. Bangladesh is subject to annual floods, a dry winter season that can be described as drought, spectacular cyclonic storms, and regular river erosion.
2. Exploitation by others. Bangladesh has been ruled by the Moguls, the British, and West Pakistan. Often more was taken out of the country than invested in it.
3. Population pressure. Within the lifetime of most grandparents, population has tripled from 35 million in 1930 to 100 million in 1986. This has led to fragmentation of land holdings and an increase of over 50 percent landlessness.
4. Illiteracy which means the inability to grasp concepts and use them to build up personal force and succeed. Half of the girls never attend school at all and most who do drop out before achieving full literacy.
5. Idleness is often cited as a reason for poverty. Most rural and poor people actually work very hard when work is available. The problem for men and women is not laziness but rather inadequate wages for work done.
6. Hierarchy, patronage, and exploitation. Bangladeshis are very conscious of rank which establishes rights to claim from those senior in the hierarchy and give or deny to dependents.
7. Individualism. Bengalis have a low capacity for social organization around an ideology or for a long period of time. Family ties are strong but cooperative ventures are often thwarted by selfish interests.
8. Trust, guilt, duty. Traditional economic relations still operate on trust but newer impersonal organizations suffer from dishonesty; embarrassment at public exposure is a stronger behavior control mechanism than guilt.

How did Zerubbabel and Nehemiah overcome opposition and obstacles? How many of the above have you encountered? Share your experiences in your group.

### Partners in Development

The reconstruction of Jerusalem and the temple also helps to show who proper partners in development should include. The options are:

- a) Work with anyone at all levels.
- b) Employ only Christians but serve everyone.
- c) Employ only Christians and serve only Christians.
- d) Employ and/or serve only some Christians (only protestants, evangelicals, "born again" Christians)

- f) Cooperate only with other Christian agencies.
- g) Work with any humanitarian organization.
- h) Link with government plans and/or officers.

Note that: - God used Cyrus and Darius (Daniel was his prime minister).

- The king sanctioned resources.
- Local officials opposed the program.
- Only Jews were allowed to work on the scheme.
- Prayer and worship were part of the program.
- The context was one of mixed races and religions.
- One of the projects was the temple

Who does the case study of rebuilding Jerusalem suggest that partners in development should be? What is the policy of your organization? What should it be? Identify your first and second choice on the list above. Debate the advantages and disadvantages of each choice.

### Religion and Development

Nehemiah was a man of prayer – he prayed a prayer of confession on hearing of the condition of people and property in Jerusalem (1:4ff);

-He prayed a prayer of petition when the king asked him what he was sad about (2:2)

-He prayed a prayer of dedication when the work was complete (3:1, 12:27-47).

He prayed a prayer of commitment to the people and their needs, (5:19)

-He prayed a prayer of benediction on his life and work (13:14, 13:22, 13:31).

The people also confessed their sins (9:1-3), praised God (9:5-35), petitioned God (9:36-37), dedicated themselves to God (10:28-39). The program began with prayer, was sustained with petition, and concluded with praise.

What place does prayer play in your program?

Describe a ground breaking, stone laying or dedication ceremony. What happen? Who participated? What program was organized?

In the New Testament salvation model on the relationship between evangelism and social responsibility this issue is explored more fully. At this point state your opinion about how religion and community development should be related.

### Conclusion

This study concludes with a basic philosophy of a true community development program

### Twelve These for Community Development

1. People are more important than things; the person is more important than the activity.
2. Growth comes from within each person; all persons have talents waiting to be discovered and used.

3. People grow in responsibility as they are helped to accept responsibilities.
4. Learning becomes most relevant when it is built into a life experience.
5. The most effective venue for training for the community's gain takes place within the community environment.
6. Community leaders know their problem and the solutions that will work, better than other know them.
7. There are resources and skills within each community that are under-utilized, waiting to be harnessed.
8. The pace of development will be determined largely by the community; a particular change will become permanent only if that community is ready for that particular change.
9. The energy put into community action will be proportionate to the involvement of the community in the planning.
10. As communities are comprehensive social systems, they are best served by integrated development methods, rather than departmentalized units that work in isolation from one another.
11. The most effective agent to act as a helper is a person who strongly identifies with the community, and who develops relationships based on mutual trust and respect.
12. Too much help leads to dependency; people should be helped only so far as it enables them to become more self-reliant.

Reflect back on the program of Zerubbabel and Nehemiah in light of this philosophy. Conclude with prayer together.

**Insert Figure 9.1 pg 234**

## TRANSFORMATION: THE MESSIANIC VISION

### STUDY 10: DREAMS AND FULFILMENTS

#### The Holism of the Old Testament

This study of transformation models from the Old Testament began by looking at the world as God made it and intended it to be. It was a picture of a harmonious relationship between God, man, and the world. Dr. Chris Wright in Living as the People of God: the Relevance of Old Testament Ethics sees this threefold interdependence as the framework for understanding all of the Old Testament. It is pictured as a triangle. (Figure 10.1)

So the old Testament is not just about man's relationship to God. Its concerns are not solely spiritual – they are social and economic too. God is concerned about how people structure their society and relate to each other. The Old Testament has a particular determination to ensure justice, a sharing of resources, the abolition of oppression, and the eradication of prejudice so that the bounty of the good land can be enjoyed by all. This breadth of concern, expressed through history over a long period of time, affirming the value of human life, and ensuring the health of human society, makes the Old Testament unique among the world's religious texts.

Refer back to the creation model and briefly describe the key points in the relationship between a) people and God, b) individuals and society, c) humans and the world.

#### A Vision for the Future

Israel experienced many leadership patterns. The personal oversight of the patriarchs as heads of the clan. The administrative ability and economic foresight of Joseph. The strong management of Moses and Joshua. The varied contributions of the judges during the period of a loose federation structure between the tribes. The integrity of Samuel who was prophet/social leader, priest/spiritual leader, and judge/political leader. Then they chose to have a king but as predicted by God the kings became exploiters and oppressors of the people. Soon Israel's kings were deposed by foreign expansionist powers and its people were either dragged into exile or left resourceless in the land. Out of this experience of the failure of the kings to establish a just society and the judgment of conquest, a new vision arose through the prophets. The vision of a new age of peace and prosperity.

The key passages in the Old Testament which describe this prophetic vision of the future God intended for His people are:

- a) Isaiah 9:1-7; 11:1-16; 19:19-25; 29:18-21; 32:1-4; 35:1-10; 40:1-5; 42:1-7; 49:8-13; 51:4,5,11,14; 54:10-17; 55:12-13; 56:4-7; 61:1-3; 65:17-25
- b) Jeremiah 23:5-6; 30:8-9; 31:10-12.
- c) Ezekiel 28:25-26; 34:22-31.
- d) Daniel 12.
- e) Joel 2:28-32; 3:18.
- f) Amos 9:11-15.
- g) Zephaniah 1:14-18; 3:16-20.
- h) Micah 4.
- i) Zechariah 3:10-14



j) Malachi 4.

Read the above passages and note points made about the relationship of a) people and God, b) individuals and society, c) humans and the world. Share your findings.

### A Modern Prophet Speaks

The world's greatest prophets and leaders have been those who had a clear vision of the future, a determination to share it, and conviction that it could become a reality. One of the greatest such visions of the twentieth centuries was articulated by Dr. Martin Luther King. He said:

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up to live out the true meaning of its creed; 'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal'.

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave-owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the State of Mississippi, a State sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that my four little children one day will live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character.

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low. The rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places straight. This is the faith that I go back to the south with. With this faith we will be able to hew out of the mountains of despair, the stone of hope. With this hope we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing we will be free one day.

This will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with new meaning "Let freedom ring"! So let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire; let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York. But not only that. Let freedom ring from the stone mountains of Georgia. Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi, from every mountainside. When we allow freedom to ring from every town and every hamlet, from every state and from every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual: 'Free at last! Free at last! Great God Almighty, We are free at last!'

-The words of hope preached to over a quarter of a million freedom marchers under the shadow of the Lincoln Memorial, Washington, 1964.

Identify five key elements of this vision.

### The Day of the Lord

The characteristics of the Day of the Lord on which all of the hopes of God's people could be realized are listed below. Summarize the verses quoted, or a quote of a key verse from each section.

#### Peace

Is. 9:6,7; Ex. 28:26, 34:25; Micah 4:3

#### Prosperity

Is. 9:3, 27:3, 32:2, 35:1-2, 35:6-7, 49:9-10, 65:21; Jer. 31:12; Ezekial 34:26-27, 34:29, Joel 2:1-9; 2:24-26, 3:18; Amos 9:43; Zeph. 3:30

#### Judgment

Is. 11:4, 24:1-3, 24:21-23, 29:20-21; Dan. 12:1-10; Joel 2:2-11; Zeph. 1:14-18, Zech. 14:1-5, 14:12-15; Mal. 3:2, 3:5, 4:1

#### Reconciliation of nature

Is. 9:4, 11:4, 44:26, 51:14, 65:22; Ez. 34:27-28; Micah 4:4; Zeph. 3:19

#### Freedom from Oppression

Is. 9:4, 11:4, 44:26, 51:14, 65:22; Ez. 34:27-28; Micah 4:4; Zeph. 3:19

#### Freedom from foreign rule

Is. 9:5, 11:4, 44:8-9; Jer. 30:8; Joel 2:20

#### Joy & Worship

Is. 9, 28:19, 51, 56:4-7; Jer. 30:9; Joel 2:28; Mal. 4:2

#### Salvation

Is. 9:2, 11:1-3, 11:11-12, 16, 19:20-25, 25:9, 35:4-10, 40:1-12, 51:4; Jer. 2:3-6; Dan. 12:10; Joel 2:32; Zeph. 3:17

#### Reconciliation of people

Is. 11:13, 19:23; Zeph. 3:10; Mal. 4:6

#### Universal Recognition of Truth

Is. 19:19, 40:5, 44:12-13, 26; Mich. 4:1-2; Zech. 14:9-16

### Messiah's rule

Is. 9:6-7, 28:16, 43:4, 60:19-20; Jer. 23:5-6; Ez. 34:23; Joel 2:23

### Healing of diseases

Is. 29:18, 32:3-5, 35:5-6, 42:7-16, 61:1-3, 65:20

### Return to Israel

Is. 54:11-12, 60:21, 65:18; Jer. 31:6-11; Ex. 28:25; Joel 13:20; Amos 9:11-12, 14-15; Micah 2:12; Zeph. 3:20

### Resurrection

Dan. 12:2-13; Zech. 14:5

## God's Answer to Humanity's Problems

The vision of the Messianic Age arose out of the struggle of the people of God and their experience of divine punishment and human cruelty. They knew that while God might punish children for their parent' sins till the third or fourth generation He shows His love to thousands of generations of those who love and obey him. So in the midst of sorrow and suffering they dreamed of a future of peace and prosperity. It was not a futile dream but a strong conviction. Within this rich tradition of the Old Testament lie God's answers to humanity's problems.

Problem 1: War. In the 40 years since the end of the Second World War there have been constant wars in the Two-Thirds World while the super powers have amassed nuclear weapons sufficient to destroy all human life on the earth 20 times over. The description of Zechariah 14:12, Their flesh will rot while they are still standing on their feet, their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongues will rot in their mouths," suggests a nuclear disaster. God's plan for the nations however, is to "beat their swords into plough-shares and their spears into pruning hooks. When the Prince of Peace reigns, nations will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore" (Mich 4:3).

The swords (And guns and tanks and rockets) are not just to be melted down but are to be made into tools of production for the benefit of all people. The Biblical mandate and the Messiah's agenda is to reduce armaments and to increase development. Arthur Simon writes:

Less than two months after becoming US President Dwight D. Eisenhower said 'Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and not clothed.' A more judicious use of power would help to reverse this 'theft from those who hunger', by releasing billions of dollars each year for peaceful development. (1984, p. 154)

What steps can we take to accomplish reduction of armaments? How can we develop a non-militaristic attitude toward others? Is peace the absence of war or something more? How do you interpret Isaiah 54:16?

Problem 2: Poverty In contrast to India where 50 percent of the population lives below the poverty line, in the West farmers are paid not to produce, and annually thousands of tons of grain are destroyed to maintain prices. In the Messianic Age, even the desert will be productive (Is. 35:6-7), and everyone will have enough to eat (Amos 9:13). Continuous cropping will be the norm. Malnutrition, the most common result of poverty, and oppression, its more common cause, will be dealt with. The constant presence of the poor (Deut. 15:11; Lk. 16:19ff; John 12:8; Mt. 25:31-45) is a continuing challenge to work to bring in the age of prosperity for all. Where God's will is done, poverty is eradicated. The initiative comes from both directions' generosity and sharing by those who have a surplus, and work and integrity by the poor. The result should be justice in the structures and organization of society.

Do you think the vision of the Messianic Age provides a mandate for both welfare and liberation approaches to development? From your reading of the Messianic passages do you think conditions in the world will get worse until the Messiah will suddenly come, or do you think they will gradually improve?

Problem 3: Disease. In a diagram of the poverty cycle developed by TAFTEE, many of the results of poverty are shown to be health-related factors (Figure 10.2). In Figure 10.2, how many health factors are mentioned? Can you add others? Are health services a good intervention point in dealing with the poverty cycle? What sort of diseases most contribute to poverty?

Read the Isaiah passage which describe the eradication of disease in the Messianic Age and list the disabilities mentioned.

The vision was of people with permanent physical disabilities whose problems were beyond the skill of the doctors, being restored physically so that they could fully participate in the life of the community. God's concern is for the total physical, mental, social and spiritual wellbeing of the community and not just for the absence of disease.

Problem 4: Minority Groups. Israel's history is the story of a minority people who were constantly threatened, harassed and dominated by other more powerful neighbors. They were constantly challenged to treat the foreigners among them in just and compassionate ways and include them fully in the life of their community (Lev. 19:33-34) Similarly the disadvantaged of their own community were to be a special target group for sharing and caring (Deut. 15:7-8; 24:12-15; Ex. 22:22-24).

By comparison with the oppression they suffered in Egypt, the brutality they experienced in Assyria, the massive dislocation of peoples which was official policy in Babylon, and the harshness of Rome, Israel had an extremely enlightened social policy.

The vision of the Messianic Age extends this policy. Every group and individual would have a homeland – some territory in which they would be secure. Foreign domination would be replaced by self-rule and any oppression within the community would be abolished so that truth and justice would become the recognized features of society. The prophets recognized

this to be the intention and plan of God.

When Jesus came it was with a special compassion for the marginalized groups of society; the poor, the lepers, women, children, tax collectors, rural people, and "sinners."

Research how many ethnic groups live in your city/area by consulting the most recent census results. Find out what ministries churches sponsor amongst minority groups in your community.

### Realizing the Vision

The question which faces Christians now is whether the vision of the Messianic Age is utopian or realizable. To answer this requires a look at God's instructions for the functioning of society and their fulfillment in the ministry of Jesus. In the chart in Figure 10.3 fill in the gaps. What conclusions can be drawn from this comparison in Figure 10.3? Do you agree that a) The blessings of the Messianic Age were intended to be enjoyed by the people of God throughout time? b) The promises of the coming of God's reign among man was fulfilled in the coming of Jesus?

### A Dream for India

Dr. Michael Bogaert, the director of the Xavier Institute for Social Service, in Bihars has expressed his dreams for a city and district of India in a similar way to Dr. Martin Luther King's dream for America.

#### The Dream

For Jamshedpur city and Singhbhum District we dream of a society where

1. Those who today suffer in their human rights, or by poverty are condemned to sub-human conditions, become, through a process of empowerment and liberation, the artisans of their own destiny, and are enabled to do so by the better off, who willingly share their assets and power.
2. Development is such that it provides full scope to ordinary people, in the urban bastis, interior villages, or in the hills to express their own genius, and develop their local communities through their own traditional structures, improved and invigorated by appropriate management and entrepreneurial motivation.
3. The human relations and values of traditional society, characterized by respect, equality between the sexes, solidarity, sharing and cooperation for the common good, are not denigrated as the values of weaklings, doomed to disappear, but as holding the answer to some of the questions which modern industrial society, trapped in materialism, individualism, and competition for power, is posing to itself today.
4. The culture, customs, languages of the aboriginal population are not being swamped by modern film culture, or drowned in the din of disco, but maintain a

vibrant life of their own and provide a source of inspiration for the renewal of modern Indian culture.

5. Land is restored to the original owners, and the latter fully exploit it for their own family, and the feeding of the nation. Thanks to appropriate technology, traditional crafts and modern village entrepreneurship flourish and help people to break out of the vicious circle of poverty-migration-poverty or the drudgery of head-loading.

6. The modern sector of the economy, industries, banks, trade, thanks to enlightened management, discipline, and good industrial relations, generate the surplus which benefits the rural economy, rather than be a drain on the economy, as is the case in other parts of the state.

7. The poorest man and woman has justice done to him/her in the courts, with the police, in government offices, in *kucheries*, without having to pay bribes, or being sent from pillar to post. A society where decisions pertaining to the village, are taken in the village and justice is equitably dispensed by the *panchayats*.

8. Those who come from outside do not see the area or its inhabitants as a colony to be stripped of its assets and dignity, but fully respect the economic, political, and cultural structures of the local inhabitants, and enable the latter to enrich their life, by sharing the economic wealth which is being generated. A society in which there are no so-called superior and inferior human beings, but all are brothers and sisters, because they are all children of the same God.

9. The natural environment is restored to its pristine balance by taking the local population fully into confidence in the management of forests, lands, rivers, and other natural resources. A society where the water, the air, the soil, and the atmosphere are not a hazard for our children and future generations.

10. People of different religions, communities, castes, and languages live in peace and amity, and appreciate each other's differences, rather than exploit them to sow hatred and suspicion.

11. Some of the youth, fortunate enough to have had an education, are willing to forgo the prestige, income, and security of an employment in industry or government and are ready to volunteer as full time agents of social change in the urban slums, and the villages of the rural areas, so that justice is done to the oppressed there, and the problem of poverty was solved.

12. The middle class from amongst the local and tribal people, through the leadership they assume in industry, business, community development, cooperatives, administration, shows that they are second to none, and that in Jamshedpur it is possible to be fully at home in industrial life, and still maintain one's own culture, identity, and one's dignity.

Implementing the Dream

It is suggested that you spell out this dream further, and make it more concrete. That you share it with other, put it in verse and song, present it in folk drama, and paint it on walls. That you take it to the people and find out whether they see their own aspiration reflected in your dream.

And then work at it, together. You may achieve little, but it gives more satisfaction to know that you have tried to bring yourself and society one step closer to a dream, than to be blind to all visions and lack all sense of direction.  
(January, 1984)

Rewrite this dream to fit your context. Decide how you want to share it.

### Final Questions

What is preventing the blessings of Messiah's rule from being experienced now?

Are development program consciously shaped by God's objectives? How does our activity now relate to the second coming of the Messiah?

### A Commitment

In the mountains of Switzerland there are many tombstones marking the spots where climbers have died. One contains words which simply tell the story of an alpine guide. They could be our motto as we work for a better future. They are "HE DIED CLIMBING."

**Insert Figure 10.1 pg 246**

**Insert Figure 10.2 page 246**



Figure 10.3

The Promised land

"I will grant peace in the land, and you will lie down and none will make you afraid." (Lev. 26:6)

"One witness is not enough to convict a man accused of any crime or offense he may have committed. A matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses."

"You will still be eating last year's harvest when you will have to move it out to make room for the new." (Lev. 26:4-5, 26:10, Deut. 28:11-12, 28:14-15)

"I will put my dwelling place among you. I will walk among you and be your God and you will be my people." (Lev. 26:11-12)

Deuteronomy 7:15

The Messianic Age

Peace: "They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nations will not take up sword against nation nor will they train for war anymore." (Micah 4:3)

Truth: "The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him. The Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord." (Is. 11:2-3, 32:3-4)

Prosperity:  
Isaiah 49:10;  
Jeremiah 31:12  
Amos 9:13

Presence of God:  
Isaiah 19:19  
Zephaniah 3:17  
Zechariah 4:9

Healing of Disease  
Isaiah 29:18  
Isaiah 35:5-6

The Ministry of Jesus

Mt. 26:52

"Let your 'yes' be 'yes' and your 'no' be 'no'" (Mt. 5:37)

"You are a man of integrity and you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. You are not swayed by men, because you pay no attention to who they are." (Mt. 22:11)

"He taught as one who had authority." (Mt. 7:29)

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and all these things will be added unto you." (Mt 6:37)

Blessed are you who are poor for yours is the Kingdom of God." (Mt. 5:20)

Matthew 1:23

"Jesus healed every disease and sickness among the people."

Isaiah 65:20

(Mt. 4:23)

"Tell John the blind receive sight, the lame walk, those with leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised." (Mt. 11:5)

Amos 26:54  
Deuteronomy 12:9,  
Deuteronomy 14:28-19  
Deuteronomy 15:4, 12  
Numbers 36:9

Equality:  
Micah 4:2-4

"Tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the Kingdom of God." (Mt. 21:31)

"Go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find. So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find both good and bad, and the wedding hall was full of guests." (Mt. 22:9-10)

"The greatest among you will be your servant. For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted." (Mt. 23:11)

"Follow justice and justice alone, so that you may live and possess the land the Lord your God is giving you." (Deut. 16:20)

Justice:  
Isaiah 32:1  
Isaiah 32:16  
Isaiah 42:13-14  
Isaiah 51:4-5

"In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the law and the prophets." (Mt. 7:12)

"He leads justice to victory." (Mt. 12:20)

"Be open handed toward your brothers and toward the poor and needy in your land." (Deut. 15:11)

Compassion/Care  
Isaiah 42:7

"When He saw the crowds he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd." (Mt. 9:39)

"I was hungry and you

gave me something to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger and you took me in. I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me." (Mt. 25:35-36)

"You must have accurate and honest weights and measures so that you may live long in the land your God is giving you." (Deut. 25:15)

Honesty  
Zephaniah 3:13  
Zephaniah 5:3

"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth." (Mt. 6:19)

"You cannot serve God and money." (Mt. 6:24)

"Do not accept a bribe for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous." (Deut. 16:19)

"It is the land of mountains and valleys that drink rain from heaven. The hand of the Lord your God is continually on it from the beginning of the year to its end." (Deut. 11:11-12)

Harmony of Nature  
Isaiah 35:6-7  
Isaiah 55:13  
Isaiah 65:25

"He rebuked the winds and the waves and it was completely calm." (Mt. 8:26)

"You must not worship the Lord your God in their way because in worshiping their Gods they do all kinds of detestable things the Lord hates. They even burn their sons and daughters in the fire as sacrifices to their gods." (Deut. 12:31)

Reverence for Life  
Micah 4:3

"The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised." (Mt. 11:5)

"Do not look down on one of these little ones." (Mt. 18:10)

"Moses set aside

cities to where anyone who had killed his neighbor without malice aforethought could flee and find refuge and save his life."

(Deut. 4:41-42;  
Num. 22:18)

Numbers 35:6  
Numbers 35:13-15

Deuteronomy 15:8  
Deuteronomy 15:18

"Walk in all the way that your God has commanded you, so that you may live and prosper and prolong your days in the land that you will possess."  
(Deut. 5:33)

"Do not be terrified by them, for the Lord your God who is among you, is a great and awesome God."  
(Deut. 7:21)

"Do not defile the land where you live and

### Harmony Among People

Isaiah 56:4-5  
Zephaniah 3:19  
Malachi 4:6

### Forgiveness

Isaiah 61:1

### Generosity

Isaiah 34:26  
Joel 2:28-29

### Worship

Isaiah 35:10a

### Peace of Mind

Isaiah 32:2-7  
Isaiah 35:10b

"If you are offering your gifts at the altar and remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother, then come and offer your gift." (Mt. 5:23-24)

"Love your neighbor as yourself." (Mt. 22:39)

Give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."  
(Mt. 1:21)

"The son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." (Mt. 9:6)

"Freely you have received freely give." (Mt. 10:8)

"Where is the one who has been born the King of the Jews? We have come to worship him."  
(Mt. 22, Luke 7:16)

"Come to me all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."  
(Mt. 11:28)

"Do not worry about food, drink, clothing, or tomorrow. Your heavenly father knows your needs."  
(Mt. 6:31-34)

where I dwell, for I the Lord dwell among the Israelites." (Num. 35:34)

Defeat of Evil  
Ex. 34:28

"If I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom of God has come among you."  
(Mt. 12:28)

"The nearest equivalents are the promises that if they structure the society the way God wills, they will live a long time in the land and their children will dwell there after them."

Resurrection  
Daniel 12:2-13  
Zechariah 14:5

"He took the girl by the hand and she got up."  
(Mt. 12:28)

"Raise the dead."  
(Mt. 10:8)

"Young man, I say to you get up! The dead young man began to talk and Jesus gave him back to mother." (Lk. 7:15)

"Lazarus, come out! The dead man came out."  
(John 11:43-44, Mt. 27:52-53)

"He's not here he has risen." (Mt. 28:6)

# TRANSFORMATION: THE INCARNATION APPROACH

## STUDY 11: RADICAL IDENTIFICATION

### Introduction

Examples of people who have given up everything to identify with the poor can be found in all ages, places, and traditions. Many of these are found in the witness of Christianity for the simple reason that Jesus, its founder, offers the greatest example of selfless love and sacrificial service.

Example 1: Siddharta Gautama. Born in Nepal as the Sakya prince and member of the warrior or ruling class, at 29 he renounced the luxury and comfort of the palace and the ties of family and became an ascetic in search of the meaning of life.

After many years of study and deprivation he experienced "enlightenment and soon gathered disciples to whom he proclaimed the four noble truths and the cause of suffering. His followers pronounced him as "the Buddha."

Example 2: Pandita Ramabai. Pandita Ramabai was born into an orthodox Brahmin family that strictly followed caste rules. Her father, however, broke tradition by teaching his wife and Sudra caste Hindus, Sanskrit and the Puranas. Pandita also learned to read and write. After the death of her parents and husband she dedicated herself to the uplifting of women and the poor.

She established a mission center where 2,000 orphans and child-widows were cared for, began schools, and teacher training programs, introduced braille to India, raised funds for famine relief, pioneered woman's hospital and the training of lady doctors, established skills training programs for women, and was the first woman to translate the Bible into another language.

### Incarnation

For Jesus the Son of God the incarnation meant stepping down to experience human life. What did Jesus give up? The biblical evidence gives a clear picture.

1) At His Birth. "Though He was rich yet for your sakes He became poor." (2 Cor. 8:9)  
"And they found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger." (Lk. 2:16)  
"An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, 'Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child to destroy Him.' And he took the child and His mother by night, and departed to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod." (Mt. 2:13-14)  
"When he heard Archelaus reigned in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee." (Mt. 2:22)

2) In His Ministry. "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air their nests, but the son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." (Mt. 8:20)  
"They took Him out of the city and led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw Him down headlong." (Lk. 4:29)

"A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and his own house." (Mt. 13:57)  
"If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and follow me." (Mt. 16:24)

3) At His Death. "As Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, He took the twelve disciples aside and said to them, 'Behold we are going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn Him to death, and deliver Him to the Gentiles to be mocked and scourged and crucified.'" (Mt. 20:17-19)

"He began to be sorrowful, even to death. And He fell on His face and prayed 'My father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will but as thou wilt.'" (Mt. 26:38-39)

"They stripped Him, and planted a crown of thorns on His head and mocked Him." (Mt. 27:28-29).

"They led Him to a place called Golgotha and crucified Him" (Mt. 27:33).

"And Jesus cried with a loud voice, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?'" (Mt. 27:46)

### Can Christians Copy Jesus?

Profile 1: Father Damien. Father Damien was a priest who devoted his life to missionary work among the Hawaiian lepers. He was not only their pastor and physician but he improved their food and water supply and housing conditions. And he formed two orphanages. The greatest success in his ministry came after he contracted leprosy in 1884. Then the people said, "He is one of us. See how he loves us." Father Damien refused the chance of a cure because it would have meant leaving his leper friends. He died on the island after 16 years of selfless ministry.

Profile 2: Albert Schweitzer. For the first 30 years of his life Albert Schweitzer devoted himself to learning, gaining doctorates in philosophy and theology, preaching and writing, and performing music. In 1905 he resigned his university posts, became a medical doctor and spent the rest of his life in French Equatorial Africa where he built a hospital and leper colony. He returned to Europe periodically to raise money through lectures and organ recitals and to receive the Nobel peace prize, immediately donating the money to his hospital at Lambaréne on the Zambezi river.

Debate the statement: "To help the poor we must become one with the poor!"

### Jesus and Poverty

The problem with poverty in Asia and Africa is that it is mulch-factored. The same people who are illiterate are also more often sick, landless, and poor. Everything works against them. They are constantly left behind in the competition for employment and resources. They have no options, no choice. The cycle of poverty can be pictured:

**Insert Figure pg 256**

To improve the quality of life of the poor, the cycle needs to be broken at more than one point. That is the major reason why integrated or holistic development programs usually prove more effective. At what points can the cycle of poverty best be broken?

### Christian Resources to Uplift the Poor

Using the dimensions of experience in the following list, state what Christians have to offer the poor:

- a) physically
- b) spiritually
- c) mentally
- d) emotionally
- e) socially
- f) economically
- g) politically

### Preparing for Ministry Among the Poor

What essential quality was Paul referring to when he wrote "Have this mind among yourself which you have in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5)?

Why is knowledge of the Bible important? Does ministry to the poor require a special call of God or is it a general obligation?

**Insert Figure pg 257**

Complete this ladder of ministry among the poor by adding five more general principles and specific actions.



## The Meaning of Incarnation

A dictionary suggest two definitions of incarnation. One is the taking of a human form by a god or spirit, and two, any person or thing serving as the embodiment of a quality or concept. The first definition describes Jesus, the second should characterize his followers. Christians today cannot do what Jesus did in terms of incarnation but they are to reflect His attitudes and priorities.

For Jesus, incarnation meant:

- a) Leaving heaven to come to earth.
- b) Divesting Himself of all the power and knowledge of God.
- c) Experiencing the limitations of childhood.
- d) Experiencing life as a refugee.
- e) Learning a trade.
- f) living in a rural, backward community.
- g) Befriending outcasts and sinners
- h) Having no income or family home.
- i) Facing death.

Construct a similar list describing what incarnation might mean for Christians today.

## Incarnation and Communication

The incarnation is the ideal model of communication for several reasons.

- a) Communication through incarnation is specific to a context. Jesus did not just appear anywhere, to anyone, at any time but to a particular people, in one time and place.
- b) Incarnation means involvement in a context. Jesus acted the truth as well as spoke it. He involved Himself in every aspect of the lives of the people he sought to help.
- c) Incarnation takes the cultural context seriously. Jesus involved Himself in the problems, debates, issues, and struggles of the people. He debated with Pharisees and Sadducees on how to be obedient to God. He shared the insults and discrimination felt by outcasts, Samaritans, women, and the poor.
- d) Incarnation means giving priority to people and relationships. Jesus chose not to write a book or pronounce a law but to communicate in face to face encounters with the needy.
- e) Incarnation means actions as well as words. Jesus communicated by what he did and who He was, as well as by what He said.
- f) Incarnation means love and service. It is the opposite of detachment. It is compassionate and complete involvement in a spirit that says, "I am here and I care." Incarnation is the best form of communication because it is speaking to a situation from the inside.

Learning the incarnation approach from Jesus means Christians too must commit themselves to a particular context; they should share the concerns and the identity of the people they serve, they ought to go to them not as masters or experts but as friends and servants. Then the people will want to hear the message of Jesus.

In what ways does the following comment from Albert Schweitzer describe incarnation?

Open your eyes and look for some person, or some work for the sake of humanity, which needs a little time, a little friendliness, a little sympathy, a little toil. See if there is not some place where you may invest yourself.

### The Mission of Mother Theresa

Mother Theresa is known throughout the world for her loving ministry to the destitute and dying in Calcutta. She has been honored by presidents, visited by the Pope, and awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Her life began in Albania where it is a crime to be a Christian. As a young nun she arrived in India and, out of a deep concern for the absolute poor who crowded the city and lived and died on the sidewalks, began a ministry of compassion which became the Sisters of Charity. She is inspired by the words of Jesus who said, "Inasmuch as you do it unto one of these the least of my brothers and sister you do it unto me" (Mt. 25:40). She also knows that in obeying the second Great Commandment to "love our neighbors as ourselves" it is possible to come to understand the true meaning of the first commandment, "to love God with all our heart, mind, and soul."

Every day, prayers precede the preparation of food and the giving of medicine. Everyone, even those whose bodies or minds can no longer perform their proper functions, are treated with dignity, love, and gentleness. When the famous British author Malcolm Muggeridge visited the Home of the Dying he was sure the building was filled with a divine glow. She is called *Mother* Theresa not just because she is the head of an order which has spread across the world but because she is loved by all. In India she is regarded as a saint and has received the country's highest award for community service.

Name and briefly describe another person who has followed Jesus in selflessness and service.

### A Visit to Calcutta

When song writer and TEAR Fund promoter Garth Hewitt visited Calcutta in 1984, he met with mother Theresa and others who had dedicated their lives to helping the poor. He wrote this song "Road to freedom to describe his experience and impressions."

The sights that fly before your eyes  
Can simply drag you down.  
I lived a year in Calcutta  
The night I hit town.  
Those sights you see they freeze your brain;  
You can't even say a prayer,  
but they don't need my pity  
They don't need my sympathy  
Let each one have his dignity  
And a chance to be on the road...

On the road to freedom,  
On the road to freedom,

Let the poor man stand up tall  
Give him back his pride.  
On the road to freedom,  
On the road to freedom,  
Give him back humanity'  
Let him know his worth  
In his Father's eyes.

And in Calcutta late at night  
A million coal fires burn;  
Smoke gets in your throat and eyes  
And heat and soul in turn.  
Your spirit weeps at pain-filled streets;  
I never knew I'd cry.  
But they don't need my pity  
They don't need my sympathy  
Let each one have his dignity  
And a chance to be on the road...

'God's Spirit is upon me now'  
So Jesus told them all,  
'Because He has appointed me  
To bring good news to the poor.  
He sent me to bring liberty  
To set the captive free.  
To fight against oppression.  
Poverty which is aggression  
To bring righteousness and beauty,  
And a chance to be on the road...

The following article, "900,000 Said to Live on India's Sidewalks," describes poverty in India.

About 900,000 people live on the sidewalks of India's two biggest cities and others of the poor who are able to find shelter have little access to drinking water or toilets, according to a survey issued Wednesday. About 800,000 people live on the pavements of Calcutta and 100,000 sleep on the streets of Bombay, said the study by the All-India Slum Dwellers' Welfare Association. The survey was issued two weeks before authorities in Bombay are scheduled to start demolishing illegal shantytowns and clearing people off the sidewalks. (AP, Bombay, Oct 16, 1985)

#### Incarnation Today

The incarnation is still the most powerful sign God has ever given that He loves mankind and can help him in his needs and troubles. From these two comments by contemporary Christian writers it is obvious there is a need for an understanding and application of the principal of incarnation. Joseph Donders states:

Christ is the Son of God, that is to say, the unique, never before occurred, and

afterwards never repeated or surpassed manifestation of divinity.

Edwin W. Smith (1907-1957) an expert in African religion, pointed out that God remains somewhat mysterious in the African worldview. God is considered to be far away, notwithstanding the fact that god continuously gives life to the world and to humankind. In the African vision God cannot be completely discharged from some responsibility for the sickness and death in this world. In a sense, God is too often absent. How often were Ugandans heard to say during the bloody regime of General Amin and its aftermath, 'God forgot our country, God is forgetting us.' Misfortunes is sometimes connected with a wrong done, but that is not always the case.

According to many African myths, God left this world and keeps at a distance. There are many stories explaining this distance. A typical explanation is the one the Ewe people in Ghana tell. They say that in the beginning God lied very near to the human family. There was one thing God could not stand: the smoke of their fires. When human beings increased and burned more and more fires, God got too much smoke in His eyes and went higher up in heaven. Humanity did not pay any attention and burned more and more fires, so God went higher and higher and farther and farther away. In other stories the reasons given for God's disappearance are the perpetual quarreling of humanity, the noise of maize grinding, and other polluting human activities. (Non-Bourgeois Theology, 1985, p. 31)

How distant or near is God considered to be in your community? What reasons do people give for their conclusions? Is the verse from the Koran, "We verily created a man and we know what his soul whispereth to him, and we are nearer to him than his jugular vein" (50/16), the equivalent to the incarnation of Jesus?

Leonardo Boff explains how the church should apply the incarnation:

Christianity can be understood as a prolongation of God's incarnation process. Just as the Son took everything upon himself in order to liberate everything so the Christian faith seeks to become incarnate in everything in order to transfigure everything. It is in this sense that we say: everything belongs in some way to the Kingdom of God because everything is objectively connected with God and is called to belong to the reality of God's kingdom.

Thus the Christian faith is not just interested in those realities as described as spiritual and supernatural. It also places a value on the material and the historical. All of these pertain to one and the same schema of incarnation by which the divine penetrates the human and the human enters into the divine. Against the background of this understanding, the Christian community commits itself to the integral liberation of human beings, not just of their spiritual dimension. Even their corporeality (and here we refer to the economic, social, political, and cultural infrastructure in their fullest sense) is 'called' to absolute realization in God and to become a part of the kingdom of the Father. As a consequence, the Christian community, especially in recent years, has committed itself more and more to the liberation of the oppressed, to those

condemned 'to remain at the margin of life, experiencing hunger, chronic illness, illiteracy, poverty...' (1983, p. 2)

How does your church prolong the incarnation?

### Incarnation and Servanthood

A reflection on Philippians 2:5-11.

v. 5 Jesus asks the most simple yet profound thing of us – to think and act as He did.

v. 6 What a giant stride it was for god's Son to step out of eternity into time.

To give up divinity with all its privileges,

To lay aside omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence,

To become dependent as a little baby.

To be a refugee, a local tradesman in a small rural town of a tiny middle eastern country in an age of poverty and violence.

v. 7 He made friends of those others avoided -

men who smelt of fish,

women who'd sold their bodies,

tax collectors who'd mortgaged their souls.

And he loved them with all His heart.

He stood tall to challenge injustice and hypocrisy in the temple.

He stooped low to wash the disciples' feet.

v. 8 He was just like us and yet He wasn't...

for the quality of His love was much more profound than ours.

He did nothing to protect His own status or comfort

He spared no effort to reach the suffering and oppressed

He avoided no danger to articulate God's truth and to demonstrate His love.

He died a young man on a cruel wooden cross for no sin of His own, but suspended between heaven and earth with arms outstretched to embrace the world, He prayed for you and me, to perpetrators and the procrastinators, the sensuous and the serious, the selfish and the simple, that we might be forgiven.

v. 9 He lives now in God's heaven as the most honored of sons and His name is echoed around the world.

v. 10 As the finest example of a life totally dedicated to the compassionate sharing of truth and love.

v. 11 To meet Him is to worship Him. To know Him is to serve Him. To experience Him is to proclaim His majesty everywhere as the One 'who was rich yet for our sakes became poor that through His poverty we might become rich.'

Have the mind of Jesus. (Bellingham, 1984)

## TRANSFORMATION: THE KINGDOM MODEL

### STUDY 12: PRIORITIES IN MISSION

#### The Centrality of the Kingdom in the Teaching of Jesus

"I must preach the good news of the Kingdom of God, for I was sent for this purpose" (Lk. 4:43).

"And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the Kingdom" (Mt. 9:35).

"It is well known that Jesus came preaching the Kingdom of God. According to the Synoptic Gospels, the Kingdom was the major theme of His sermons and parables" (CRESR Report, 1982).

One writer describes the importance of this theme with the words:

The central aspect of the teaching of Jesus was that concerning the Kingdom of God. Of this there can be no doubt and today no scholar does in fact, doubt it. Jesus appeared as one who proclaimed the Kingdom; all else in His message and ministry serves a function in relation to that proclamation and derives its meaning from it.

'Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand' (Mt. 4:17)...with these words the first two evangelists sum up the whole message of Jesus. (Bornkamm, 1960, p. 7)

The message of Jesus centers upon the Kingdom of God. Altogether, the three Synoptic Gospels contain approximately 114 references to the Kingdom of God.

#### The Signs of the Kingdom

At the consultation of the relationship between evangelism and social responsibility in 1982 (CRESR), evangelical scholars suggested seven signs of the presence of the Kingdom. They are:

1. Jesus in the midst of His people.
2. The preaching of the gospel.
3. Exorcism.
4. Miracles of healing and control over nature.
5. The miracle of conversion and new birth.
6. The "fruit of the spirit": in the lives of Christians.
7. Suffering.

These features therefore should be present in programs seeking to extend and demonstrate the presence, reality, and priority of the Kingdom in human communities. In the development program you work in or know, state how much these signs feature in the planning and practice of the organization or project. State your assessments as percentages.

## Images of the Kingdom

There are three basic contexts for the stories Jesus told. Some parables are set in the marketplace, others in the countryside, and yet others in the home.

### 1) Commercial Images

- a) A hidden treasure (Mt. 13).
- b) A valuable pearl (Mt. 13).
- c) A catch of fish (Mt. 13).
- d) A king settling accounts (Mt. 18).
- e) A rich man challenged to share his wealth (Mt. 19; Mk. 10; Lk. 10).
- f) House builders (Mt. 7).
- g) A reward for faithfulness and fruitfulness (Mt. 21).
- h) Managers (Mt. 25; Lk. 19).

### 2) Agricultural Images

- a) A farmer sowing seeds (Mt. 13; Mk. 4; Lk. 8)
- b) A field of wheat and weeds (Mt. 13; Mk 4)
- c) Mustard seeds and shrubs (Mt. 4; Lk. 13).
- d) Helpless sheep (Mt. 9).
- e) An abundant harvest (Mt. 9).
- f) Tenants of a vineyard (Mt. 21).

### 3) Family Images.

- a) A housewife preparing bread (Mt. 13, Lk. 13).
- b) A child with implicit faith (Mt. 18, Mk. 9, Lk. 9).
- c) Conflict between service and status (Mt. 20, Mk. 10)
- d) Offering a cup of water to the helpless (Mt. 10, 25; Mk. 9).
- e) A marriage feast (Mt. 22; Lk. 14).
- f) Guests at a wedding (Mt. 25; Mk. 13; Lk. 12;).
- g) Providing food, shelter, and clothing (Mt. 25; Lk. 12).

Choose one image from each group and, beginning with the words, "The Kingdom of Heaven is like..." write a parable in your own words. Repeat the exercise with another image not in the above list.

Another analysis of the parables notes that there are 61 in total, highlighting 34 persons (the Good Samaritan etc.), 156 things (four soils etc.), seven plants (mustard seeds etc.) and four animals (lost sheep etc.).

## Stories as a Medium for Conveying Truth

Having recognized the centrality of the idea of the Kingdom in the teaching of Jesus and the range of image He used to describe the Kingdom, this study now looks briefly at the form in which this teaching was given.

The characteristic beginning for Jesus' instructions about the Kingdom was, "The Kingdom of Heaven is like..." This was the literary form for a parable. Today the term "illustration" or simply "story" would be used to describe the same thing. Jesus was a master story teller. He

chose stories rather than allegories, legal prescriptions, poems, or philosophical argument to convey the most important spiritual truths about Gods' will for the world and its people.

The most important point is not just that He chose stories but that these stories were filled with objects, places, and events which the people could easily understand. Everyone knew about weddings and wheat, sheep and stewardship, catching fish and building houses. These things appeared constantly in their own stories and many appeared in the traditions of the Old Testament.

A bridge of understanding with any people group can be built when the gospel is illustrated with images used in their stories of their past experiences. For example, to the people of Papua New Guinea who practiced child sacrifice to settle disputes, Jesus was presented and accepted as the "peace child." The gospel, then, came as good news!

In Bangalore the collapse of a multistory building provided a powerful illustration of greed, faulty planning, and poor workmanship. Suggest other elements in the gospel which might link with the stories of other ethnic groups.

### Values of the Kingdom

In the Beatitudes Jesus calls blessed those who would normally be considered unfortunate, powerless, and under the judgment of God. They include the poor, those who suffer death in their families, the meek, those who desire justice, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, those who suffer persecution for their beliefs. These people are blessed because their circumstances of life help them to know and come to God.

In Matthew chapter 5 this passage is followed by the woes – on the rich and hypocritical and later on the Pharisees, whose legalism blinded them to the spirit of the law they professed to be experts on, and to the love of God for all who suffered. Riches, hypocrisy, and legalism are barriers to recognizing and belonging to the Kingdom.

How can churches and Christian development organizations promote Kingdom values and combat worldly values? Would Christians be more successful if they remained as disciple teams or house churches? What is the optimum size of an organization or community to express servanthood?

### Kingdom Priorities

Jesus stressed that the Kingdom itself should be the top priority in life. 'Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added unto you' (Mt. 6:33)

The investor sells all to buy the great pearl and the treasure-bearing field. The shepherd leaves all to find the lost sheep; the father gives all to celebrate the lost son's return; and the housewife searches everywhere to find the misplaced coin. The Kingdom is a treasure and discovery without equal. The first Kingdom priority is the Kingdom itself.

The second priority of the Kingdom is service for others. The rebuke to the disciples when they sat in the important seats and sought privileges in the Kingdom makes this point. The



challenge is to offer whatever one has, even if it is only a little – a single coin, a cup of water – and Jesus' final parable which linked such actions with membership of the Kingdom and entry into heaven reinforces this priority.

Teaching about the Kingdom and service for the King are two sides of one coin in the gospel record. Jesus went about preaching and teaching and healing all kinds of diseases. True Kingdom development combines proclamation and service. Estimate the extent to which this is true of your project or a development program you know.

On the "kingdom graph" (Figure 12.1) mark where your project fits. Interpret your results. A score on the rising diagonal indicates a balanced program. A high number suggest success, a low number suggest failure.

### Characteristics of the Kingdom

In Signs of the Kingdom Lesslie Newbigin describes characteristics of the Kingdom not always stressed by evangelicals. He believes that Jesus taught that the three main characteristics of the Kingdom are:

1. It is universal. It embraces everything. It brings liberation to such infrastructural dimensions as sickness, poverty, and death. It restructures interpersonal relationships characterized by the absence of hatred and a plenitude of fellowship. There is a new relationship with god, who is the Father of all His beloved children. The Kingdom of God cannot be reduced to any dimension of this world, not even a religious dimension' Jesus regards as diabolical any temptation to reduce the Kingdom to some particular segment of reality, whether political, religious, or miraculous (Mt. 4:1-11)
2. It is structural. It not only embraces everything but it also signifies a total revolution of structures. It does not merely modify the outlines of reality but goes to the roots and brings total freedom.
3. It is definitive. Because it has a universal and structural nature, it implies the end of the world. The Kingdom defines God's ultimate and final will. This world in which we live and suffer is coming to an end; there will be a new heaven and a new earth where justice, peace, and concord among all God's sons and daughters will finally triumph in the Father's great house. We can understand Jesus' exclamation: "Happy the eyes that see what you are seeing!" (Lk. 10:23)

A feature of the Kingdom parables, especially the agricultural images, is that they emphasis growth. The Kingdom is a living, growing, dynamic reality, or should be, because it is the Kingdom of a living God. Kingdom values should be spreading wherever the King's ambassadors are located.

Another feature is the invitational aspect. The Kingdom attracts participants and participation. People are encouraged, persuaded, and compelled to enter and many, mostly the poor, do.

The final key feature is the judgmental aspect. The existence of the Kingdom brings a division of belonging or not belonging. The Bible states that the judgment of not belonging is final and

catastrophic. The goal for the King's servants is to ensure that everyone belongs and that their every action is consistent with the ethics of the Kingdom.

### Kingdom Leadership

1) The Rightful Leader. Obviously the king is the leader of a kingdom. Acknowledging the lordship of Christ was central in the early Christian creeds. Under persecution from earthly, political, and religious leaders, they proclaimed "Jesus is Lord" and often paid the consequences. The hymn in Philippians chapter 21 which starts by speaking of the humility of Jesus ends with the triumphant statement,

"Therefore God has highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven, on earth, and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of god the Father."

An acknowledgment of the lordship of Christ must be included in every program and project which would seek to be a sign of the future God intends. Knees bowed now and tongues confessing now are the authentic signs of the reality of the Kingdom in our midst.

2) Jesus' New Model. Jesus modeled a new style of kingly leadership. He constantly chastised the Pharisees for making and interpreting laws in ways which bound the human spirit. He sought to liberate people to become what God had made them. To do this He didn't promulgate laws or rule from a palace. HE mixed with the people "preaching good news to the poor, liberty to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind. He healed the broken-hearted and set the oppressed free. He announced the Kingdom had come" (Lk. 4). Kingdom leadership is not demonstrated by large offices or large numbers of staff. It is demonstrated by being out among the people, meeting them where they are, hearing their concerns and helping them meet their needs with the resources at hand, especially the power of god, released through faith and prayer.

3) Servant Leadership. Jesus challenged His disciples "Don't be like the Pharisees who love to show their importance by their fine robes and pious prayers...". "Whoever wants to be great among you must become servant of all" "And He took a towel, wrapped it round himself, and washed the disciples feet." Jesus Himself was the greatest example of selfless service.

A creed for development workers is,  
Go to the people, Live among them  
Learn from them, Love them  
Start with what they know  
Build with what they have  
And of the best leaders  
When the task is accomplished  
The people will all remark  
'We have done this ourselves.'

Though not intended to be a necessarily Christian statement, these words express well a part of the Kingdom philosophy. The three characteristics of Kingdom leaderships are 1)

acknowledging the King, 2) going to the people, and 3) serving the poor.  
Discuss how your project expresses and encourages this type of leadership.

### Modern Parables

The goals of the Kingdom can still be well expressed in parables. Below is an example written by Huub Oosterhuis in the book The Children of the Poor Man. After reading this parable attempt to write a similar brief story.

There was once a man who had two sons and when he died each received half his land. The one son was rich, but he had no children, the other the other had seven sons and was poor. That night the rich son could not sleep. My father has made a mistake, he thought, for I am rich, and my brother is poor; his land is not enough for so many sons. And he got up went out before daybreak in order to move the fence.

The poor son, too, lay awake that night. My father has made a mistake, he thought, for I have my seven sons but my brother is lonely – and he got up and went out in order to move the fence before daybreak. When the day broke, they met one another. I tell you, in that very place the city of peace will arise.

What is Oosterhuis saying in this parable? To where were the brothers planning to move the fence?

### Five Perspectives on the Poor

To begin ministering incarnationally to the poor, the negative images most non-poor people have of the poor, must first be dealt with. They are typically viewed in five ways (Figure 12.2). Each has implications and associated solutions.

#### 1. Mirror Analogy

Cause: A lower standard of living is a superficial difference between people. Rich and poor are basically the same. This denies the seriousness of poverty.

Cure: Provide some opportunities for improvement but no radical change is needed.

#### 2. Pollution Analogy

Cause: The poor are healthier than the rich who are polluted by materialism. Idealizes native peoples and cultures.

Cure: The poor are the hope for a revitalization of western society. Identification with and mobilization of the poor to bring in the new society.

#### 3. Natural Analogy

Cause: The poor are biologically inferior or simply different in nature and social structure.

Cure: Coexistence, separate development, or block aid for the poor to use in their own way.

#### 4. Medical Analogy

Cause: Sickness exists in the social, physical, and mental spheres, resulting in stunted outlooks and opportunities.

Cure: Education, training, and community organization or removal of children of healthy environments.

## 5. Moral Analogy

Cause: The poor are sinners and must repent. The World and its people are flawed and immoral.

Cure: Punishment to contain the evil, and change through repentance and rescue.  
(Adapted from Harman, 1984)

What attitude toward the poor did Jesus display? Discuss in groups. What perspective does your organization have?

### Images of the Poor

Lazy	Insecure	Impersonal
Dependable	Conservative	Progressive
Mature	Emotional	Uncommunicative
Uncooperative	Restless	Helpful
Professional	Frustrated	Concerned
Irresponsible	Confused	Backward
Enthusiastic	Dogmatic	Hard-working
Money-minded	Efficient	Immature
Loyal	Insincere	Idealistic
Undependable	Over-productive	Apathetic
Encouraging	Risk-taking	Responsible
Supportive	Self-controlled	Unprofessional
Over-sensitive	Impulsive	Appreciative
Superficial	Naive	Exploited

1. From the list of adjectives given, which best describes the urban worker? 2. Which best describe the unemployed? 3. Which best describe the rural villager? 4. From the same list, which best describe the average student? 5. Which adjectives best describe your parents? 6. And finally, which adjectives seem to best describe yourself?

### The Compassion of the King

This study concludes with a meditation called "Footprints".

One night a man had a dream. He dreamed he was walking along the beach with the Lord. Across the sky flashed scenes from his life. For each scene he noticed two sets of footprints in the sand; one belonging to him and the other to the Lord.

When the last scene of his life flashed before him, he looked back at the footprints in the sand. He noticed that many times along the path of his life there was only one set of footprints. He also noticed that it happened at the very lowest and saddest times in his life.

This really bothered him and he questioned the Lord about it. 'Lord, you said that once I decided to follow you, you'd walk with me all the way. But I have noticed that during the most troublesome times in my life, there is only one set of footprints. I don't understand why when I needed you most you would leave me.'

The Lord replied, 'My son, my precious child, I love you and I would never leave you. During your times of trial and suffering, when you see only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you.' (Author unknown)

**Insert Figure 12.1**

**Figure 12.2**

## TRANSFORMATION: DISCIPLESHIP

### STUDY 13: TRAINING METHODS OF JESUS, PAUL & PAULO FRIERE

All development programs and churches have a training function. It is therefore helpful in this series of studies, to explore the training goals and style of Jesus and Paul to see how their methods can help to prepare people for effective ministry. A comparison is made with a modern Christian community educator, Paulo Friere.

#### Becoming Disciples

- 1) Use of the Term. Of all the terms used in the New Testament of followers of Jesus by far the most common is the word "disciple." It appears more than 260 times. By contrast the most common word used today, "Christian," appears only three times (Acts 11:26, 26:28; 1 Pet. 4:16)
- 2) A Common Teaching Method. Teaching by discipling was a common educational and leadership pattern. AT the time of Jesus other groups of disciples followed John the Baptist (Mt. 9:15; John 1:35; Acts 19:1-5), the Pharisees (MK. 2:8; Luke 5:33), and Moses (John 9:28)
- 3) Jesus' Choice of Disciples. The disciples of Jesus were ordinary men. In his essay "The Twelve's Men" dealing with the British jury, the late G.K. Chesterton wrote,

Whenever our civilization wants a library to be cataloged, or a solar system discovered, or any other trifle of that kind, it uses up its specialists. But when it wishes anything done which is really serious, it collects twelve of the ordinary men standing around. The same thing was done, if I remember right, by the founder of Christianity.

Jesus indeed chose and trained 12 ordinary men.

- 4) Jesus' Choice of 12. Choosing 12 was symbolic. It was an acted parable in the tradition of the Old Testament prophets. By His choice of twelve men, the number of the tribes of Israel, Jesus proclaimed his intention to create a new Israel, and whenever he appeared with His 12 men the number itself would say, to people with insight, "This is the Messiah and the new People of God."

Responses:

1. Read one of the gospels and note every occurrence of the word "disciple."
2. How many disciples do you think John the Baptist, the Pharisees, and Moses had?
3. List the known professions of the disciples.
4. What other numbers of disciples are mentioned in Luke 10:1 and Acts 1:15?

#### Making Disciples

In Matthew's gospel the Great commission was the "make disciples." This last command of Jesus contrast with the first, to become disciples by "following Jesus." The word disciple literally means "one who learns." Prof T.W. Manson says that in Aramaic the word meant "apprentice" rather than "student"; 'their discipleship was not matriculation in a rabbinical

school but apprenticeship to the work of the Kingdom" (Hunter, 1964, p. 60).

The method by which to produce disciples was by going, baptizing, and teaching. IN Greek these three words are participles while "making disciples" is an imperative. The conclusion then, is that making disciples is the goal; going, baptizing and teaching are the means of achieving it.

Write out the five statements of the great commission in Mt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15; Lk. 24:27, 49; John 20:21; and Acts 1:8.

Note that the scope is to all nations, the power is the Holy Spirit, it is a continuation of the ministry of Jesus, and it will be by proclamation and demonstration. Quote references for the above points. What other points should be made from these verses?

### Learning from Jesus

Peter the disciple, said of Jesus, "He left us an example that we should follow in His steps" (1 Pet. 2:21). This can apply not only to personal faith and actions but also to training policies. This study focuses on four key features of Jesus training style.

1) A Limited Number. Jesus' teaching ministry was offered at three levels:

a) Individual enquirers with whom He took time to discuss particular issues. Some of these were sympathetic and genuine, others antagonistic and asking questions only to find fault with Jesus argument. (Lk. 10:25ff; 11:1, 37, 45; 12:13; 13:23; 18:18).

b) The disciples. As time progressed Jesus increasingly concentrated on explaining His ideas and actions to the 12 disciples. (Lk. 9:18; 16:8-9, 22; 17; 18:1).

c) The crowds. People came from all the towns and villages to hear Jesus. In Jerusalem they lined the streets and hailed Him as the Messiah. The sick and their families sought Him out to get His help. (Lk. 4:31; 6:17; 7:24; 8:1; 12:54; 15:1; 20:1,9).

The most strategic of these groups was clearly the second. A small number of special learners who stayed with Him during His three year ministry. This small group He redesignated "apostles" meaning "sent ones" (Luke 6:13), and in them He invested the most time: of them, 11 out of 12 proved successful.

Application:

1. How many people does your training program target? List programs and numbers.
2. What are the advantages of small groups over crowd and individuals?

Case Study: The TAFTEE Pattern. Approximately 25 years ago theological extension was pioneered in Asia by a group in India. Today the program has 600 students working in degree level courses and 3,000 students working at certificate level. Courses are written in a programmed learning format and studied by students individually in their homes. Each week the students come together for a small group discussion of issues, sharing of problems, and conducting of small tests. The tutorial group is a vital part of the educational process and undoubtedly contributes to the success and continuity of the students.



2 A Long Period. Jesus took three years of full-time input to train His disciples. If the best teacher in the world needed that much time, how much more we must need! Yet most training programs in the Christian development field are much shorter.

List programs you know and their length Note: In preparation for the Wheaton '83 conference on "The Church in Response to Human Need" the World Evangelical Fellowship prepared a book describing training courses in Christian community development. World Vision has also produced a list. Readers interested in training in these fields could consult these sources.

#### Case Study: EFICOR Training Unit:

Aware of the shortcomings of existing programs which ranged from one day seminars to three month courses, the EFICOR Training Unit launched a new program in 1984. In a one month intensive course some well qualified church members and pastors with experience in, and commitment to serving the poor, and to integrating faith and action, were trained. That theoretical foundation was however only the beginning of a two year commitment and relationship during which period Training Unit staff visited them on location, and they returned at 6 month intervals for reflection and skills training. Through this educational process it is anticipated that deeper and more appropriate learning will take place.

Why do you think Jesus kept the disciples with Him for three years? What implications does this have for your training program.

3) An Action-Reflection Process. The third notable feature of Jesus' training method was that it was certainly not a formal classroom experience. The countryside was their lecture room, life experiences their curriculum, demonstrations their object lessons, and dialogue their learning process. They went everywhere with Jesus, saw what He did and listened to what He said. Then they sought clarification of points they didn't understand. After some time they themselves went out to preach and heal and then regrouped to discuss their success and failures. Education theory suggests that people remember 10 percent of what they hear, 30 percent of what they see, and 90 percent of what they do. Draw a diagram or bar chart to represent these proportions.

Most Bible and theological colleges need to re-examine their curricula in light of the teaching method of Jesus. To do so would reduce the formal classroom time and increase the field experience where values and beliefs are explored and explained in face to face contact with the community. It is in this direct encounter with people and ideas that truly relevant learning is most likely to take place. Do you agree? Why/Why not?

The structure John's gospel demonstrates a close link between event and explanation and suggests that the deepest spiritual truths about Jesus are illustrated by what He did.

#### Reference

Chapter 4

#### Event

Meeting the woman  
at the well

#### Explanation

Jesus can give  
living water.

Chapter 6

Chapter 8/9	Jesus heals the blind man.	He is the Light of the World.
Chapter 10		Jesus is the Good Shepherd.
Chapter 11	Lazarus is raised from the dead.	
Chapter 15	Cultivating a vineyard	Jesus is the

Fill in the spaces. What actions have you, your Church, or your program taken which have most effectively raised spiritual questions and created opportunities for explanation of the gospel? What issue-raising actions could you take?

### Paulo Friere's Philosophy of Education:

In the 1970s Paulo Friere, a Catholic priest working in South America and grappling with issues in an oppressive society, began to define education in a new way. His book Pedagogy of the Oppressed suggests that the purpose and process of true education is:

1. The humanization of relationships between individuals and groups in society.
2. The liberation of oppressed and oppressor.
3. To change the unjust structures of society.
4. The expression of love.
5. To enable the emergence of a new holistic humanity.
6. Participation of the oppressed in their own development.
7. The change from being objects to being subjects of events.
8. Involvement in reflection and action (praxis) on the dehumanizing structures and relationships of their society or situation.
9. Freedom from low self-esteem, hopelessness, dependence and dehumanizing models.
10. The commitment to struggle for liberation.
11. The process of dialogue.
12. The acceptance of responsibility for themselves.
13. Partnership of educator and learner in discovery of reality.
14. Affirmation that people are in the process of becoming.
15. Recognition of people as historical beings, creators of their own history.
16. Is prophetic and hopeful regarding the future.
17. Emphasis community rather than individuality.
18. It stresses being rather than having more.

Which items in the above list seem to agree with the training approach of Jesus? Share reasons for your choices.

### Paul's People Development Program

There is a feature of Paul's approach to discipling from which to learn, and that is his deep concern for people. This is shown in three ways:

1) Choice of Colleagues. Paul didn't like to be alone. He took people with him on his great missionary journeys. His first companion was the gentle Barnabas, his next young John Mark, then Titus and Silas, and for a long time Timothy. Where he stopped to teach he gathered co-workers and disciples. In the introductions to his letters Paul identifies several companions. Who is with him when he writes his letters? (See 1 Cor. 1:1; 2 Cor.1.2; Gal. 6:21; Phil.1.1; Col.1.1; 1&2 Thes. 1.1; 2 Tim. 3:12; Philemon 23:24)

2) Frequency of Correspondence. Of the New Testament writers Luke with his history of Jesus and the early Church and Paul with his letters to congregations and individuals are the most prolific. Next comes John with his gospel and the three short letters and vision and then the other gospel writers, Matthew and Mark. Finally there is James, Peter, Jude, and possibly Apollos.

Paul had a short life: he was killed in Rome with the outbreak of persecution in A.D. 53 or 54. Into his 20 to 25 years of Christian service he squeezed extensive traveling, constant speaking, and frequent letter writing. Because of their deeply spiritual content these letters were valued and preserved by the early church until about 150 A.D. When the New Testament canon was fixed with Paul's letters included.

Paul's concern for people shows through on every page. The one who defined the fruits of the spirit (Gal. 5:22:23) and wrote the sublime appeal for the supremacy of love in all human relationships (1 Cor. 13) was not content to speak in general terms. All his letters are filled with personal references, especially the endings.

Look up Romans 16 and note how many people are mentioned. What is the total number of individuals plus groups mentioned? Now look at the conclusions of Paul's other letters to see how this care for individuals and their needs continues to be his great concern.

3) Recognition of People's Potential. Paul was a people-builder. He exercised a constant ministry of encouragement. The following three examples illustrate this.

a) Mark. The passage in Acts 15 which describes the dispute between Paul and Barnabas over Mark seems to suggest the opposite. It would be easy to conclude that Paul was judgmental, rigid, and unforgiving. It is true that he did not travel with Barnabas after that point but at the end of the letter to Philemon there is a pleasant surprise. The writers of the two of the gospels are in Rome with Paul – one is Mark and the other is Luke. It is certain that Luke had not written his account of the life of Jesus at that time and likely that Mark had not done so either.

It is quite possible that the encouragement to produce these invaluable aids to a better understanding of Jesus came from Paul. The actual writing of course, was inspired by the Holy Spirit. Paul obviously did not regard Mark's early failure as permanent. He practiced as well as preached, forgiveness and reconciliation. There is a ministry of rehabilitation and the creating of new beginnings for people who have failed.

Can you quote experiences or examples of such a ministry?

b) Sosthenes: Acts chapter 18 includes a description of one of the campaigns to silence and

sentence Paul. It was led by Sosthenes, leader of the synagogue and the Jewish community in Corinth. Thinking that the newly appointed governor Gallio, who had a reputation for impartiality would agree with them, the Jews presented a case against Paul. Gallio however dismissed the case as a local religious dispute not a judicial matter and when Sosthenes came out of the court room he was stoned, probably by his fellow Jews for losing the case or possibly by a crowd sympathetic to Paul. At that point Paul and Sosthenes were clearly enemies.

When, sometime later, Paul writes to the Corinthian church he conveys greetings from himself "and our brother Sosthenes". The probability is that it is the same Sosthenes as in Acts 18. So Sosthenes, like Paul, who once tried to stamp out Christianity and imprison or kill it's leaders, had become a Christian. More than that he is a special friend and colleague of the man he tried to kill and is commended to the church he tried to destroy (See 1 Cor. 1:1)

What attitude would Paul and the Christians in Corinth need to demonstrate to achieve this result?

c) Onesimus. The final example from Paul's life is even more dramatic. When Paul was in Rome he lived under house arrest in the refugee quarter of the city. People from all corners of the empire congregated there hoping to find excitement, employment, and anonymity in the crowded city. One such person was Onesimus who had stolen money and run away from his master. In Rome he meets Paul who tells him not only of the grace, forgiveness, and dignity to be found through faith in Jesus but also of his responsibility to return to his master, seek reconciliation and restoration, and resume his duties. To assist Onesimus, Paul writes a letter of commendation and offers to refund the stolen money. He appeals to Philemon to treat Onesimus as a Christian brother. At that point the New Testament part of the story ends.

But it is not the end of the story. Many years later Ireneaus tells the story of the church in Ephesus, the largest Christian congregation in the world. After Paul's ministry there for two years which go the church established, the saintly apostle John settled there and built the church up into a thriving worshipping and witnessing congregation. Then John was exiled to the Island of Patmos and the church was leaderless. They searched around for a suitable replacement and chose Onesimus. A runaway slave became the second permanent minister of the largest church in Asia. This is a remarkable testimony to the value-changing power of Christianity. And the process began with Paul.

From any of the previous studies on transformation identify biblical principles which made such an event possible. Now return to the summary of Friere's qualities of an educator and note points of agreement and disagreement between him and Paul.

### Current Reflections on Discipleship

Two quotations from Orlando Costas aid reflection on what discipleship really involved.

a) Though Jesus' invitation to "follow" sounded similar to that of the rabbis of his day, it was , nevertheless, quite different. Juan Stam has listed seven basic differences between following Jesus and following rabbis.

1) Following Jesus was by invitation only, whereas with the rabbis it was by

request. The rabbinic disciples chose their teachers rather than the teacher choosing the disciples, as was the case with Jesus.

2) Becoming a disciple of Jesus involved a practical education that encompassed one's entire way of life. With the rabbis, it was purely intellectual, theoretical, and abstract.

3). Jesus' invitation to follow was grounded on a personal relationship. That of the rabbis was basically doctrinal.

4) Following Jesus was a gift of grace. The disciple was not required to pay Jesus' salary. With the rabbis, it was in some sense a commercial enterprise, since their disciples were obligated to pay for their instruction.

5) The discipleship of Jesus demanded absolute commitment. The rabbis did not and could not make such a demand.

6) With Jesus, life of discipleship was a communal reality; he and his disciples constituted a closely knit fellowship. With the rabbis, there was hardly any room for fellowship.

7) The discipleship of Jesus was permanent. The invitation was for life. No one could, therefore, expect to "graduate". In the case of the rabbis, it was a temporary learning program. The goal of the rabbinic disciples was to become rabbis themselves, once the training period was over, whereas with the disciples of Jesus, they were expected to go on learning from, depending upon, and serving their Master.

Thus, although there were many similarities between Jesus and the rabbis, the contrasts were far greater. Little wonder that those who heard him "were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes "(Mk. 1:22).

b) To teach obedience to Jesus Christ in all things is the great challenge of the world evangelization today. Everywhere we go, we are confronted with the question of what kind of disciples we are making if there is no noticeable change in their mental structure and lifestyle; if their energies are interiorized and exhausted in intro-church activities rather than in the transformation of their history; if they make no effort to related to reality; if they leave Christ out of important areas of life – like economics and politics- and reduce him to the realm of the private self or the religious club. We need to call into question discipleship programs that shun the imperative of obedience and put their emphasis on shallow slogans, that major on abstract truths and minor on concrete actions, that stress commitment to Christ without demanding the fruits of repentance, that under-score "baptism without church discipline", that permit "communion without confession' and restitution.

Disciple-making is an indispensable criterion for evaluating missional faithfulness. One way to evaluate our missional program is to ask three

questions: (1) Is it leading woman and men to follow Jesus at each crossroad of life? (2) Is it enabling them to participate in Jesus' mission in the world? (3) Is it teaching them to obey him in all things? Following, Participating, and obeying. These are marks of authentic discipleship and of a faithful Christian mission. (1979, p. 15, 24).

Teacher Student Relationships:

The relationship between teacher and student can be depicted in four ways:

Teacher Lectures Student listens Teacher is dominant	Student dominates Teacher ineffective Little is learned
Neither Dominates There is equality Little is learned or taught	Teacher facilitates Student participates Maximum Learning Teacher and student form a strong relationship

Which pattern do you think Jesus, Paul and Paulo Friere model is? Which pattern is most typical of your educational experience? See figure 13.1 for an exercise which would explore the implication of these patterns of education. Role play each situation to demonstrate the difference. Alternately share experiences of discipling as an instructor or learner.

Conclusion

This concluding quotation shows how different Jesus' criteria for choosing disciples was from the way secular society thinks. Discuss the following imaginary report.

MEMORANDUM

To: Jesus, Son of Joseph  
Woodcrafter Carpenter Shop  
Nazareth  
From: Jordan Management Consultants  
Jerusalem.

Dear Sir:

Thank you for submitting the resumes of the twelve men you have picked for the management positions in your new organization. All of them have now taken our battery of tests; we have not only run the results through our computer, but also arranged personal interviews for each of them with our psychologist and vocational aptitude consultant.

It is the staff opinion that most of your nominees are lacking in background, education and vocational aptitude for the type of enterprise you are

undertaking. They do not have the team concept. We would recommend that you continue your search for persons of experience in managerial ability and proven capability.

Simon Peter is emotionally unstable and given to fits of temper. Andrew has absolutely no qualities of leadership. The two brothers, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, place personal interest above company loyalty. Thomas demonstrates a questioning attitude that would tend to undermine morale. We feel that it is our duty to tell you that Matthew has been blacklisted by the Greater Jerusalem Better Business Bureau. James, the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus definitely have radical leanings, and they both registered a high score on the manic-depressive scale.

One of the candidates, however, shows great potential. He is highly motivated, ambitious and responsible. We recommend Judas Iscariot as your controller and right-hand man. All of the other profiles are self-explanatory.

We wish you every success in your new venture.

Sincerely yourselves  
 Jordan Management Consultants  
 (Author Unknown)

<b>Teaching – Facilitating Styles</b>	
1. Characteristics of the Institution	1. Characteristics of the Institution
2. Qualities of the Teacher	2. Qualities of the Teacher
3. Learning Atmosphere	3. Learning Atmosphere
4. Results Predicted	4. Results Predicted
Teacher Lectures Student listens Teacher is dominant	Student dominates Teacher ineffective Little is learned
Neither Dominates There is equality Little is learned or taught	Teacher facilitates Student participates Maximum Learning Teacher and student form a strong

	relationship
1. Characteristics of the Institution	1. Characteristics of the Institution
2. Qualities of the Teacher	2. Qualities of the Teacher
3. Learning Atmosphere	3. Learning Atmosphere
4. Results Predicted	4. Results Predicted



## TRANSFORMATION: THE SHARING MODEL

### STUDY 14: ELIMINATING POVERTY

#### Charity in the Church

From Acts to Revelation the key New Testament texts which speak of sharing are:

Acts 2:42-47	1 Cor. 16:1-4	1 Tim. 6:6-10
Acts 4:32-37	2 Cor. 8:1	Philemon 1:15-18
Acts 6:1-7	2 Cor. 9:5	Heb. 10:34
Acts 11:29-30	2 Cor. 9:6-15	James 2:14-17
Rom. 12:10	Gal. 6:9-9	James 5:1-6
Rom. 13:30	Eph. 6:5-9	1 Pet. 2:18-20
Rom. 15:26-27	Phil. 4:10-20	1 Pet. 5:2-4
1 Cor. 4:8-13	1 Thes. 2:9	1 John 3:16-18
1 Cor. 9:4-14	1 Tim. 5:1-10	1 John 4:19-21
1 Cor. 10:24-26	1 Tim. 5:16	3 John 1:5-8

This seems a surprisingly long list. The concern of John, Peter, Paul and the early Christians to demonstrate their faith in acts of mercy is a central concern, not a peripheral interest of the New Testament. Read the above passages and put them in the column below which best represents their primary message.

Don't accumulate wealth	Support Yourself	Care for the widows and hungry	Take up offerings for poor Christians	Humanize roles in society	Sell and distribute your possessions

Write out two key verses in each category.

#### Reflections on Sharing

Many scholars have made perceptive comments about sharing in the scriptures. Orlando Costas summarizes the New Testament position.

The stress on poverty in the life and ministry of Jesus coincides with the social teaching of the Old Testament, where the poor occupy a privileged place, and with the poverty program of the early church (e.g. the community of good depicted in the early chapters of Acts; with the special attention given to widows; with the concern for the poor of Jerusalem reflected in Paul's

collection; the insistence on social equality – on a relation of mutual love and acceptance – in the gathered community of faith and in the personal relationship between believers ; and with James' stern denunciation for the oppression of the poor by the rich in the church). Little wonder that the Gospel writers take such care to bring out special anecdotes and parables underlying the special relationship between the good news of the Kingdom and the poor of the earth. Luke in fact goes as far as stating that they are the heirs of the Kingdom: 'Blessed are you poor, for yours is the Kingdom of God' (Lk. 6:21) (1979, p. 77)

Maria Neal presents the claims of the needy:

In Deuteronomy 24:10, in a discussion of loans, there is a clear explanation that whatever a person pledges for a loan is to be returned before sundown if the person needs it for the night. The example used is that of a poor person's cloak. What is made clear is that no right to ownership supersedes human need. Because the hungry soldiers were allowed to eat the loaves reserved for temple worship, and the apostles the corn in a private cornfield on the Sabbath, we know clearly that no matter who possesses it, it belongs to hungry people. Relinquishing one's claim to what others need is clearly a Gospel mandate. The claim is not supposed to be relinquished foolishly, as some have argued, in such a way that Christianity becomes an impossible ideal. The obligation is one of justice, to be honored when the society fails to provide for its members and for sojourners. The point is that the resources of society belong to the people. (1977, p. 104)

Thomas Hanks describes the perspective of James:

James places himself firmly in the ranks of the prophets who viewed oppression as the basic reason for poverty (James 2:1-7, 5:1-6). Never does he shift the blame to the poor themselves, because of racial inferiority, laziness, vices, or other reasons. The rich bear the basic guilt because they exploit and oppress. 'Look: the wages you failed to pay the workmen who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord all-powerful' (5:5)

The church, the brotherhood of the poor, is viewed as God's initial response to the problem of poverty. Is it a scandal if the church does not anticipate the culmination of the Kingdom by caring for the needs of its neediest members: 'If a brother or sister is ill clad and in lack of daily food, and one of you says to him, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled, " without giving them the things needed for the body, what does it profit?' (2:15-16)

Furthermore it is not merely the genuineness of individual faith, but the church's very authenticity that is at stake in this activity. It befits the church to respond to requests, but more importantly, to take the initiative in searching out needy persons. God judges for the church not for its orthodoxy, but for its orthopraxy: "Religion that is pure and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their oppression (thlipsis) and to keep oneself unstained

for the world' (1:27)

We should recall that in the Old Testament the orphans and widows (along with foreigners or immigrants) became the prototypes of the oppressed class. Similarly, the church's authenticity depends on its commitment to the oppressed.

God's final response in the face of oppression and its resulting poverty is the Lord's return. (1983, p 135)

In small groups take turns sharing with others the main points each of these writers is making.

### Rich and Poor Today

The physical quality of life differs markedly between the rich and the poor, urban and rural, the developed and underdeveloped. A comparison of countries indicates those disparities (Figure 14:1).

What do you think are the historic and contemporary reasons for South Asia's very low GNP? What other indicators of physical quality of life could be added?

### The North-South Divide

The "Global 2000" report describes the difference between the rich and poor in the world today.

We have today about two-thirds of mankind living – if it can be called living – on less than 30 cents a day. We have today a situation where there are about one billion illiterate people around the world, although the world has both the means and technology to spread education. We have nearly 70 percent of the children in the Third World suffering from malnutrition, although the world has the resources to feed them. We have mal-distribution of the world's resources on a scale where the industrialized countries are consuming about twenty times more of the resources per capita than the poor countries. We have a situation where in the Third World millions of people toil under a brilliant sun from morning till dusk for miserable rewards and premature death without ever discovering the reasons why. For the past four centuries countries of the South (Third World) have experienced economic underdevelopment and political subservience while the North (First World) has been able to expropriate any economic surplus and maintain its relative economic and political ascendancy. Today two international systems exist and the disparities between them are growing. One is the world of the rich, the other the world of the poor.

One world is literate, the other largely illiterate; one industrial and urban the other predominantly agrarian and rural; one consumption oriented the other striving for survival. In the rich world, there is concern about the quality of life, in the poor world about life itself which is threatened by disease, hunger, and malnutrition. In the rich world there is concern about the conservation of non-renewable resources and learned books about how the world should be kept in

a stationary state. In the poor world there is anxiety not about the depletion of resources, but about their exploitation and distribution for the benefit of all mankind rather than a few privileged nations.

In 1974 the United Nations drew attention to this relationship between rich and poor nations and the problem of income distribution within nations. The concluding session of that General Assembly prophesied that disparities would be at the center of the world political stage over the next century and further, that peaceful change toward a more just society would be the challenge of our time. (1980, p. 2)

Descriptions of poverty on a national scale seem remote. OT personalize the problem describe to the group the poorest person who you know among your relatives, in your church, in your community. Say why you think they are poor. Repeat the exercise by describing the richest person you know, giving reasons for their wealth.

### No Needy Persons

Acts 2 and 4 describe the ultimate goal of all development efforts – that there should be “no needy persons among us.” The early church actually achieved this!

1. The Context: “They were together” in learning - “they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teachings” (Acts. 2:42); in experiencing God's power - “Everyone was filled with awe and many wonders and miracles were done by apostles” (Acts 2:43); in worship - “They continued to meet together in the temples courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people” (Acts 2:46-47); everyday – their togetherness wasn’t a superficial meeting at church once a week or a greeting in the bazaar. It was a daily deep commitment and relationship of shared faith, experience, concerns, and joy. It is in this context of being “together every day” that the sharing of economic goods takes place.
2. The Concern: To grow in faith - “They devoted themselves to the apostles teaching”, “they met daily”; to enjoy community - “all the believers were together and had everything in common” (Acts 2:44); to practice sharing - “Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need” (Acts 2:45).
3. The Consequences: There was harmony - “All the believers were one in heart and mind” (Acts 4:32); there was equality - “no one claimed that any of their possessions were their own but they shared everything as they had need” (Acts 4:32); there was justice - “From time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them and brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles’ feet.”
4. The Conclusions: they grew - “The Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved” (Acts 2:47); they eradicated poverty - “There was no needy person among them” (Acts 2:34).
5. The Challenge: The Holy Spirit prompted this expression of their faith for a purpose. IT was to be a sign of God's answer to the economic problems for the world. IT was to be an evidence of God's presence and power among them. It was to be a proof of changed beliefs

and values.

What are signs of Christian answers to poverty today? What structures and actions have the potential to be signs of a new way of living? Is the goal of “no needy person among us” a priority in your church? What proofs do Christians offer of changed beliefs and values?

### Sharing and Revival

In the 18<sup>th</sup> Century in England a remarkable movement began which brought Christianity to the poor and revived the Church. As in New Testament times, the Holy Spirit added daily those who were being saved. The leader of the movement was Charles Wesley. It seems no accident that as in the New Testament church, the English believers shared their goods.

Wesley's teaching on Christian economics has been described by Thomas Madron:

For Wesley, property was never an inalienable right; any person holds property only as a steward of God, and God can at any time take the property away. Thus God in His capacity as sovereign makes the final choice as to the disposition of property. Because God is sovereign, 'He must be the possessor of all that is and because He holds title to all that is, He may resume His own property at any time. People may use property only for those purposes that God has specified, and those who fail to use it as God directs have no moral right to it. It is possible, though by no means clear, that Wesley thought a person's legal right to property should be questioned if, in the use of the property, God's law is contravened. Thus for Wesley a person is not an owner but rather a trustee or steward of property.

The charge Wesley directed at the rich was, 'Be ye ready to distribute to everyone according to his necessity. This is essentially what Wesley meant when he counseled that people should gain all they can, save all they can, and give all they can. In its highest development, this concept of 'distribution according to need' refers to what, in Wesley's thought is the highest concept of economic organization – primitive communism, the kind of organization he thought existed among the early Christians. The outcome of Christian love was to be a society in which all things would be held in common. Thus in the early church 'so long as that truly Christian love continued, they could not but have all things in common'

Wesley went so far as to advocate the practice of a community of goods among Methodists. His objective was to bring them as close as possible to the practices of primitive Christianity. The evidence for this position is clear. Among the rules set down for the select Societies by the first Conference (1744) was the following: 'Every member, till we have all things common, will bring once a week, bonafide, all he can toward a common stock.'

What do you think of this philosophy? Could it be practiced in your church?

## The Importance of Community

From a dictionary or book on development, write a definition of community.

1. Defining a Community: A community can be defined in many ways. It is:
  - a) "A group of people who live in a geographical area and have an interest in each other for the purpose of making a living."
  - b) "A form of social organization existing between the family and the state."
  - c) "A locus for social systems of a particular kind composed of interactions and social institutions which meet basic human needs, through which people have developed a sense of belonging and a potential ability to act together as an entity."
  - d) "While consisting of several parts, community is of itself a part of a larger social system also. It is a dynamic social unit which is subject to change of internal or external origin."
  - e) "Some of the important characteristics of community are: communities are close-knit entities; their customs are interrelated; there is a discernible leadership within the community."
- 2) Characteristics of a Community: A community may be defined in terms of:
  - a) Territory.
  - b) Common Interests
  - c) Common patterns of social and economic relations.
  - d) A common bond of solidarity from the conditions of its abode.
  - e) A constellation of social institutions.
  - f) A recognized degree of group control.

Identify a group which could be described by each of the above characteristics.

- 3) Distinctives of Christian Communities: Christian communities are not different in kind but in the quality of life they experience together. It was to give "more abundant life" that Jesus came. It was to make a people who were nothing into a "holy nation" that God acted in human history. It was to create a community of conviction and caring, of love and sharing, of joy and hoping that the Holy Spirit gifted the church.

So the Christian Community should be marked by a greater degree of common belief than other groups. It should be identified by an increased concern for the needs of others. It should be characterized by a stronger hope for the future. On the chart in Figure 14.2 estimate the strength of these qualities in the life of the Christian community. Share the reason for your rating.

## Positive Functions of Poverty

The poor are usually looked down upon yet they fulfill important roles in society. According to an American writer, in the United States of America the poor help the non-poor economically, socially, culturally, and politically in at least 15 ways.

### Economic Functions:

1. The poor do the dirty, menial, dangerous, and low-paid work.
2. By accepting low wages, the poor permit employers to maximize profits.
3. The poor as clients provide jobs in the helping and policing profession.
4. The poor buy cheap and second-hand goods, and visit the mediocre professions.

### Social Functions:

5. The poor can be called deviant to legitimize dominant norms.
6. The deserving poor provide a target group for compassion and charity, and make the non-poor feel fortunate.
7. The more-conforming middle class can vicariously enjoy the sexual and social excesses of the poor.
8. In a stratified society, the presence of the poor guarantee the status of the non-poor.
9. The poor enable the upward mobility of those who exploit them or provide legal and illegal services for them.
10. The poor act as charity recipients for the aristocracy and the religious

### Cultural Functions

11. The poor have provided labor to build the monuments of civilization.
12. The affluent buy, borrow, and adopt cultural products – music, dance, crafts – of the poor.

### Political Functions

13. The poor are made symbolic clients of opponents by political groups.
14. The poor can be made to pay the price of progress and change and provide soldiers for war.
15. Because the poor do not participate fully in democracy, they can be ignored by those in power.

(adapted from Hartman, 1984, p. 117-118)

### The Collection for the Poor

Paul is thought of as a great missionary and evangelist but not often as a fundraiser and community worker. Yet the most frequent texts about Christian sharing in the New Testament relate to his efforts to involve the Gentile church throughout Asia in providing for the needs of the poor Jewish Christians in Jerusalem.

Check the scripture passages at the beginning of this study to see which ones address this issue and note the verses which make the following points.

- a) The occasion was a famine – natural disaster.
- b) The example was Jesus, who, though rich, became poor for our sakes.
- c) The inputs, though substantial, were expected to be temporary.
- d) The rationale was that in the Christian community the need of one group placed an obligation on other groups to help.
- e) The expectation was that the helped would become helpers.

Now relate how your church has or might respond to Paul's appeal. Possible responses are included on Figure 14.3

### God's Selfless Saints

There are many examples of people who have shared their goods and by doing so have witnessed powerfully to God's love for the needy. Here are two brief examples. Find and add

a third one.

Thaddeus Kosciuszko was a Polish patriot who fought for freedom in both America and Poland. It is said that he could never pass as beggar without giving some help. Eventually, his horse learned to stop at the sight of a beggar without Kosciuszko pulling on the reins.

St Francis of Assisi, the Patron Saint of Birds and Animals, lived by this motto: "The spirit of true giving is when you give something you need to someone who needs it more."

### Christian Contributions to Development

Since 1950 Christians have shared significantly in shaping the philosophy of development. There is a clear progression of thought and action. Responses have been:

- a) Charity in the form of gifts of food, money, and clothing to the poor and underdeveloped.
- b) Self-help projects where the disadvantaged could earn and become independent.
- c) Social justice programs which sought to distribute resources more fairly in the community.
- d) Structural Analysis recognizing that there are sinful structures as well as sinful individuals.
- e) Liberation movements which have challenged oppressive political power elites.
- f) Transformation theology which recognizes the fallenness of all human institutions and seeks total renewal through value change.

These responses have taken place against the backdrop of three major international views of development.

1. Ideological perspective, corresponding with the western liberal tradition and emphasizing individualism, liberty, freedom, and democracy.
2. An alternative ideological perspective stemming from socialist movements and emphasizing equality, community, social justice, and social well-being.
3. A technological model, neither laissez-faire nor totalitarian in philosophy which uses economic analysis and aims at growth in productivity and increase in the standard of living. (Development Tracks, p. 15, 252)

Which of the above responses does your organization make? Which do you think is "most Christian"? Which is "least Christian"?

### Reflection

This study concludes with a poem and a challenge.

#### THE KEY TO LIVING IS GIVING

A favorite story of mine  
Is about TWO SEAS in Palestine.  
One is sparkling jewel,  
Its waters are clean and clear and cool.  
Along its shores the children play  
And travelers seek it on their way;  
and NATURE gives so lavishly  
Her choicest gems to GALILEE.



But on to the south the Jordan flows  
Into a sea where nothing grows;  
No splash of fish, no singing bird,  
No children's laughter is ever heard.  
The air hangs heavy all around  
And shuns this barren ground.

Both seas receive the Jordan's flow  
The water is just the same, we know.  
But one of the seas, like liquid sun,  
Can warm the hearts of everyone,  
While farther south another sea  
Is dead and dark and miserly -  
It takes each drop the Jordan brings  
And to each drop it fiercely clings,  
It hoards and holds the Jordan's waves  
Until like shackled, captured slaves  
The fresh, clear Jordan turns to salt.  
And dies within the DEAD SEAS vault.

But as the Jordan flows so n rapturously  
As it enters and leaves the GALILEE  
For every drop that the Jordan gives  
Becomes a laughing wave that lives -  
For the GALILEE gives back each drop  
Its waters flow and never stop.  
And in this laughing, living sea  
That takes and gives so generously  
We find the way to LIFE and LIVING  
Is not in KEEPING but in GIVING.  
Yes, there are TWO PALESTINIAN SEAS  
And mankind is fashioned after these!  
(Author Unknown)

Dr. Ronald Sider in Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger believes, "If a mere fraction of North American and European Christians would begin to apply biblical principles on economic sharing among the worldwide people of God, the world would be utterly astounded" (1977, p. 99)

Make a prayer response to these challenges to live a biblical faith.

**Figure 14.1 Insert UN Chart on Average Per capita GNP, POLI, and COMPONENT INDICATORS**

Figure 14.2

	Very Weak									Very Strong
Belief	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Sharing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Hope	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Figure 14.3

My church has...

Possible Responses

My church could...

An extra collection for an emergency need.

Continuing support for a poorer congregation.

Appointment of a social services worker.

Research into people's needs in your area.

Tithe the church budget and give to the poor.

Bring goods to church and share them.

Make deacons serve the poor rather than organize the saints

Adopt a slum or poor rural community.

Study the problem of poverty

Others

## TRANSFORMATION: THE SERVANT PATTERN OF LEADERSHIP

### STUDY 15: FOOTWASHING AND SOCIAL CHANGE

#### Servanthood in the Bible

Many leadership styles are illustrated in the Bible. The theme of servanthood, however, runs like a golden thread through the stories of the heroes of the faith.

Abraham the father of the nation showed his generosity in offering nephew Lot the first choice of grazing lands.

Jacob served 14 years without wages in order to win his wives.

Joseph began as a slave but through the excellence of his service became the most trusted leader in Potiphar's household, the prison, and Potiphar's land.

Moses, strong before Pharaoh, was described as the "meekest man in all the earth," after he dispersed leadership among the clans of the Hebrews.

Deborah worked for peace and restored village life to enrich the lives of the common people.

Gideon, Amos, and David all came from insignificant families and became leaders through the integrity of their actions, and because God chose and empowered them.

Jonah, God's most reluctant prophet knew his vision and strength could achieve nothing in the strongest city in the world, yet in three days as God's mouthpiece, Jonah saw it repent.

Daniel, a prisoner of war, served faithfully in a foreign land and changed the religion of an empire.

Jesus, the supreme example of servanthood, humbled Himself, worked selflessly, offered His life as a sacrifice, and died on a cross at 33.

Paul, the great missionary described himself as a servant of Jesus Christ and in that service was beaten, imprisoned, stoned, and killed.

Peter, tradition says, was crucified upside down because he didn't feel worthy to die the same way as Jesus did.

Using a dictionary, define and compare the roles of leader and servant.

#### Secular Leadership

1. Negative Patterns: There is a darker thread running through the fabric of the biblical tapestry. It illustrates the constant temptation for the people of God to adopt secular concepts of leadership. Early biblical examples include the Babelites (Gen. 11) and Pharaoh (Ex. 1-11) for whom leadership meant the right to dominate.

Moses in the first months beyond the Red Sea reserved the right to decide for himself (Ex. 18:13-26). As Jethro counseled, this was neither good for Moses nor for the people. He was wise to change the pattern before having a physical and mental breakdown. In India there are many leaders following that original pattern of Moses. They make all the decisions themselves and people have to wait hours to see and talk to them.

The third distorted leadership “right” prevalent in the Indian subcontinent is the right to perpetuate a dynasty. Apart from two years, India, the world's largest democracy, has been led by one family since 1947. In Bangladesh the daughter and widow of two former presidents lead the main opposition alliances.

The final destructive pattern of leadership readily observable today is the right to divert resources of the country and community for personal profit. The deposed Ferdinand Marcos of the Philippines was only one of many leaders who have diverted huge sums of public money to their private accounts.

Read the Exodus passage. What was Moses doing? Why was it wrong? What did Jethro propose? Rate your national and local community leaders on the scale in Figure 15.1. A score below 20 indicates a leader in need of transformation or demotion.

2. Positive Contributions: Leadership today is not just an art, it is a science. As such it has been studied intensively in industries and universities throughout the world. Four valuable approaches for the Christian development worker are:

a) Management of Tasks and People: To get any job done people have to be directed and motivated and given tasks to accomplish. The strength and orientation of a particular leader can be tested and plotted on a managerial grid. Score yourself on the grid in Figure 15.2 and share your conclusion with your leader or a person whose assessment you value and trust.

b) Leadership by Promise-Keeping: Ed Dayton of World Vision in Together (Jan-March, 1986) described people who manage by promise-keeping as those who: Set goals (make promises) for themselves and their organizations which they believe can be accomplished; put all their energy into doing what they said they would do; tell those to whom they have promised as soon as they believe they will not be able to keep their commitment; and attempt to understand the reason for failure and what corrective action they will need to take in the future.

The issue, as Jesus emphasizes in His story of the servants (Mt. 25:14-30), concerns integrity. If we keep our promises and are faithful in small tasks, people will trust us and know we can handle greater responsibility.

c) Management by Consensus: Another approach to leadership is to stress that people work best at tasks they have helped to plan and goals they have set themselves. Leaders are therefore trained and encouraged in participatory decision making processes even when hundreds of people may be involved in accomplishing the task. This is especially important in development work where one of the goals is the self-reliance of community members. Meetings with community leaders and members should take place throughout the development process.

d) Leadership Through Discipling: One of the key strategies of Jesus, Barnabas, and Paul was to train others “on the job” by engaging them as learners and companions as they fulfilled their task. Observing the leader, assisting the leader, and participating alongside the leader, enables the disciple to learn thoroughly, not just the theory of what one is to do but the pragmatics of daily challenges and difficulties which will enable one to function successfully independently or in turn become a discipler.

Write a brief paragraph beginning “The leader I most want to follow is one who...”

### Jesus the Leader

Two features stand out above all others in the leadership of Jesus: He spoke with authority and He served with humility.

1) He Spoke With Authority: Luke 4:2 says, “They were amazed at His teaching because his message had authority.” This authority was shown not only when He addressed crowds of people but also when He called His disciples and they immediately followed Him (Mt. 4:19-22); when He disputed with the religious leaders (Mk. 12:12, 24-27); when he confronted the exploiters (Mt. 21:12-13, John 2:15-16); when He challenged sickness (Mk. 4:4); when He drove out evil spirits (Mt. 8:32, 17:18); and when He dialogued with the political leaders (John 19:11)

The sources of this authority were that He was the Son of God and that He spent many hours in prayer. In Christian leadership prayer precedes proclamation. If it does not, there will be no “word from the Lord.”

State your existing prayer plan or make one now adequate to undergird the leadership responsibilities you have or may have. Martin Luther, the great 16<sup>th</sup> century reformer, when asked how he managed to accomplish so much each day replied, “I am so busy that I have to rise at 4:00am to spend four hours in prayer.”

2) Jesus Served With Humility: Pater Marshall, chaplain to the U.S. Senate, describes the foot-washing incident of John 13 in The First Easter with these words:

Because there were no servants to bathe their feet and because they had been arguing about who was to be chief among them, nobody had made any gesture of ceremonial washing.

They had walked past the earthenware pitcher of water at the door and had taken their places around the table – angry, argumentative, sulking, cross, tired.

We can imagine them stretching out their robes so as to cover their feet – pretending there was nothing wrong – when everything was wrong. They had looked like sulky schoolboys. Who wanted to stoop to do a slave's work?

Now, during the supper, Jesus rose and took off His outer garment. Then He took a towel, girded Himself, poured water into the basin, and began to do the menial thing that not one of them would do – He began to wash the disciples' feet. And He did it because He was the Son of God.

That lowly loving deed expressed in all its loneliness, the glory and humility of His heart. (p. 17).

Read John 13:1-17. What do you think Jesus' words, "I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you" mean today?

### The Identity of Christians

1) Servants: For Christians servanthood is something the individual must choose. It is not a role or status imposed on a person or group by others. The Christian's identity as a servant has four dimensions. First, Christians are Servants of God. "No servant is greater than his master" (John 13:16). God is Creator and Jesus is Lord. Recognizing this Christians offer service to God.

Second, Christians are servants of the Kingdom. Being God's servants they seek to do His will. They are assigned to carry out His plans for the world. We are commissioned to be builders of His Kingdom so that the prayer He taught; "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" becomes a reality.

Third, Christians are servants of Each other. "Not that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's' feet (John 13:14). In the early church believers were encouraged to "choose from among you" people to serve (Acts 6:3)

Fourth, Christians are to be servants of the poor. One of the newest Christian missions in Asia, called "Servants to Asia's Poor," is placing people in the slums of Asia's major cities to live alongside and minister to the poorest of the poor. This was what a Polish priest did in Anand Nagar, a slum of 70,000 migrants to Calcutta, as described in City of Joy by Dominique LaPierre (1985).

While the bible emphasizes servanthood as the Christian's primary identity and role, it is not the only one.

2) Sons and Daughters: Christians are sons and daughters of God. Therein lies their security, the platform from which they can serve, for however menial the task, their status is secure. Christians serve not because they can do no other more skilled task, but because they chose to and nothing others can say about them will alter the fact that they are valued children of the Most High God. Therefore Christians have freedom to serve.

3) Citizens: Christians are also citizens of the Kingdom of God (Eph. 2:15, Phil. 3:20). They have already been accorded the ultimate status possible as members of God's eternal kingdom. To expend energies gaining power and prestige in this world may be to forfeit membership in the new world. Being citizens of the Kingdom of god also means that Christians are attentive to another set of instructions, values, and ethics. They are to be tuned in to God's will, to the Kingdom agenda.

4) Stewards: Christians are also stewards of God's world. Four of the parables of Jesus talk of stewards being given responsibilities in God's vineyard (Luke 12, 16, 19, Mt. 25). This echoes the original command of God (Gen. 1:28-30) where God appointed Adam as the

steward of the creation to use it, not abuse it, to benefit from it, not destroy it, and to live in an interdependent relation with it. Humankind constantly fails as a steward and it is part of the Christian mandate to challenge society to live out the vocation God has given them.

5) Shepherd: Christian leaders are to be shepherds of God's people. Ezekiel 34 and Matthew 23 are laments that the religious leaders have become overlords and oppressors of the people of God, rather than their examples and guides. The most profound analogy in the Bible of the ideal relationship between pastor and people is that of the shepherd. It is the image of David's most famous Psalm and of Jesus tender story of the one who searched for the one lost sheep. It was Jesus whom scripture calls the Good Shepherd (John 10:11), the Great Shepherd (Heb. 13:20), and the Chief Shepherd (1 Pet. 2:25); He also became the lamb that was sacrificed for the sin of the world (John 1:29).

### Hinduism and Servanthood

Hinduism is the most hierarchical of the world's major religions. It recognizes four major castes. Highest are the Brahmans, the priestly caste. Next come the Kshatriyas, the warrior caste, followed by the Vaisyas, the merchant caste. And finally, the Sudras, the tradesman's caste. Forty percent of India's population however does not belong to any of those groups. They are "untouchables," whom Gandhi named Harijans (Children of God), now often called dalits meaning the poor, and officially referred to as scheduled castes and tribes. Strict rules govern the relationships between the caste groups with privileges reserved for the higher castes and the untouchables, as their title implies, being ostracized and poor. Despite the fact that the constitution officially abolished caste distinctions and the government reservation system tries to increase their opportunities for advancement, India's dalits are still at the bottom of the socio-economic scale.

The concept of servanthood is a difficult teaching in India where caste Hindus find the idea of serving someone of lower social status abhorrent. How would you present the concept of servanthood in an Indian context?

### Case Study: Dr. Ambedkar – Untouchable Extraordinaire

Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar was born a Mahar in Maharashtra in 1891. When studying for his B.A. in Bombay, because he was low caste he had to sit separately in the corner of the class and his teachers would not touch him for fear of pollution. He was sponsored to study at Columbia University in New York and gained M.A. and Ph.D. Degrees in economics.

On his return, however, he was still treated like a leper by caste Hindus. He returned overseas this time to gain a D. Sc. and became a barrister in London. From 1926 he became the acknowledged leader of India's depressed classes. While Gandhi proposed religious and moral acceptance as the answer to untouchability, Ambedkar insisted on a political solution. He declared that Hinduism's caste system was an instrument of torture for all Untouchables.

He took part in the London conferences on the future of India and in 1932 the British announced special seats would be reserved for the Oppressed Classes. He was appointed to many high civic and government posts including the Executive Council, the first time an Untouchable had ever held such a high position. Despite opposition by the Congress leaders, Nehru appointed him as Law Minister in the first cabinet, after independence which meant he

drafted the constitution which declared “untouchability” abolished.

At the end of his life he converted to Buddhism, was regarded as a bodhisatva, and was admired for his honesty, integrity, and total dedication to the welfare of the Untouchables. He is worshiped by the Jatavs of Agra as a saint and mahatma. (adopted from Owen Lynch's The Politics of Untouchability)

Is untouchability abolished in practice?

### Development Workers as Servants

Acts 6:1-7 tells of the appointment of the first deacons, or Christian relief organizers They were:

- a) Democratically elected. The whole group discussed the issue, prayed about the matter, and chose the “ones who serve.”
- b) People full of wisdom and the Holy Spirit. The same qualities were expected of those who would serve as in those who were called to preach.
- c) From a disadvantaged minority group. The Greek speaking widows were being neglected in the daily distribution of food. When the Christians, predominantly Jews, responded to this situation they elected seven Greeks to be the supervisors of the program.

How can appointments be made by the community?

How is a deacon/one who serves/development worker viewed in your community or organization? Rank the following titles according to perceived status. Choose the title you like best and state why.

Organizer, coordinator, change agent, catalyst, officer, director, teacher, educator, assistant, worker, activist, animator, motivator, servant, sevak, facilitator, conscientizer, person, cadre, liberator, developer, helper, volunteer, pastor, priest, social worker.

What is the trust level in your organization?

One of history's greatest servants of God was St. Francis of Assisi known for his love of nature and his simplicity of life. His best known prayer describes the attitude of servanthood:

Lord make me an instrument of your peace.  
Where there is hatred, let me sow love.  
Where there is injury, your pardon Lord.  
Where there is doubt, true faith in you.  
Where there is despair, let me bring hope.  
Where there is darkness, light.  
And where there is sadness, only joy.  
O master, grant that I may never seek,  
So much to be consoled as to console,  
To be understood as to understand,  
To be loved as to love with all my soul.  
For it is in giving that we receive,  
In pardoning that we are pardoned,  
And in dying that we are born to eternal life.



Write your own prayer of dedication to Christian service.

### The Role of a Community Organizer

The United Nations lists 78 functions for a community development worker. They can be summarized in four main roles:

1. The role of guide.
2. The role of enabler.
3. The role of expert.
4. The role of social therapist.

1) The Role of Guide is the primary role. The community organizer helps the community to organize their resources and achieve the goal. He/she should be more objective. He/she should not enforce, only help them understand and be involved in deciding for themselves.

The organizer needs:

- a) Initiative to work with communities; to encourage local initiative and should not be a passive follower. He/she should stimulate discontent.
- b) Objectivity to accept the community as it is.
- c) Identification with the community as a whole and not a part of a group of the community; to establish good relations with communities and thus promote cooperative decision making.
- d) Acceptance of role: if the organizer feels incapable of it, it is better that he/she rejects it. He/she should foster discipline and be able to pass judgments when questions arise.
- e) Interpretation of the role to the community continuously. The organizer should explain why he/she is not a leader.
- f) The community organizer should be very firm.

2) The Role of Enabler is to facilitate the community organization process. This is done by focusing discontent; that is, by helping the people to verbalize deep and hidden feelings of discontent. The enabler should exercise a lot of patience. His/her role is extended while doing this because it is done with individuals and groups. He/she should be able to differentiate between social and personal problems. The enabler has to encourage organization of the community.

The main problems of a community are apathy and passivity. Community organization is a slow and painful process because people are indifferent. To promote organization meaningful communication is necessary. People participate only when they feel they will receive a personal advantage or gain. He/she should nourish inter-personal relations, i.e. be more of a friend than a professional worker. Sensitivity to the feelings of the people is another vital characteristic. Their meetings should take place in an informal atmosphere where the villagers can comfortably verbalize their needs.

3) The Role of Expert includes a) community diagnosis, b) research skills, c) information about communities, d) advice on methods, e) technical information, and f) evaluation.

A community organizer should be an expert in diagnosing the community's problems and making people aware of them. He/she should have the research skills to know thoroughly about the community. Knowing information about other communities is also necessary. The ability to educate and advise on the various methods and be capable of identifying new

leaders, conducting meetings, forming interaction, is vital to this role. Evaluation of personal work, programs, and improvement of the community should be done at regular intervals.

As an expert, the worker may directly confront the group with the facts and concepts which may be reassuring and helpful to it. The worker should be skilled in research methods, able to carry out studies on his/her own and to formulate research policy. He/she should also work closely with those who may be engaged to carry out the research project. The worker should be well informed and able to provide resource material and technical plans; to bridge the gap between the resources available and the community's need for such resources.

4) The Social Therapist role implies diagnosis and treatment of the community as a whole. The community organizer should make an in depth study of forces within a community, which either lead to its own organization or disorganization. Diagnosis also of psychological forces in the community and in group interaction. Later, treatment is for the whole community starting with individuals. The worker's diagnosis must provide the community with some understanding of its nature and character: treatment must involve the community in a process in which self-understanding and released tension removes blocks to cooperative work. (Source: RUHSA CERT Unit, Tamil Nadu, India)

What roles does your organization recognize and promote? What role do you play?

#### Qualities of a Development Worker

A catholic agency in Maharastra, India identifies important characteristics (Figure 15.3) for people working for social transformation. Add any other qualities you believe a Christian development worker needs. Which most suggest servanthood?

#### Servanthood Today

Being a servant of Christ and His Kingdom in the modern world means four things.

1) Theological Thinking Dr. Vinay Samuel of Bangalore concludes an article on leadership with a biblical paradigm (Together, Oct-Dec 1986, p. 26):

I would like to suggest the Trinity as a model for leadership. While Jesus continues to be the focus as He was incarnate and sharer our life, it is the total Trinitarian framework that provides our theological basis for leadership.

As Trinity, God is a community, a team within Himself. God is a Trinity The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit act in community; the Father does not act alone. While the three persons of the Trinity are differentiated and not confused, there is no precedence of status in the sense that one always comes first and another always comes second. Rather we have that G.B. Caird calls the model of the apprenticeship carpenter. In John 5:19ff Jesus says 'The Son can do nothing of His own accord, but only what HE sees the Father doing.' IN verse 22 we read 'The Father judges no one but has given all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father.' In other words, the initiative and the signal to act does not always come from one direction. The flow is circular within the Trinity. And the flow is circular from them to the world. We have here a leadership team.

Within the Trinity we perceive different roles highlighting aspects of leadership. The Father provides care and security and gives people their identity. They are members of His family, His sons and daughters. As Father He cares for His children. He provides them with space and opportunities to grow as any earthly father would. The Son has a different role. He became incarnate, born as one of us. He shared our humanity and carried our grief, burdens, and sins. His role on earth was a servant. His role in the heavenly sphere is (according to Hebrew 7:25) to intercede for us. He is our go'el, our dimension to leadership. The spirit is yet another role. He is our enabler-companion (parakletos). He is the one who empowers God's people with gifts for service. His gifts are our resources for us to develop by His power.

2) Humble and Compassionate Action: in Primal Vision John Taylor tells of an interesting belief held by an African people.

In Ghana it is believed that this destiny is determined by the manner in which the new living being takes leave of god before being born. It may say, 'I go to the world and like all that is agreeable, well-being, long life, all good things', or it may go forth saying, 'I choose grief, rags and dark cloth', or even 'I taboo all good things and good news.' Such unsatisfactory leave-taking makes it an okrabiri, a black, unfortunate soul. Similarly, among the Yoruba the word for destiny means 'to kneel and choose', because before child is born its soul is said to kneel before the deity and choose its fate on earth. Those who humbly make reasonable requests receive what they ask during their life on earth. However, those who make their requests as if they had the right to expect whatever they wanted, do not receive them. (1974, p. 47).

The New Testament the same truth.

When the apostles fight over which of them is the greatest, Jesus instructs them not to be like the kings of the Gentiles who lord it over their subjects. And among Christians, the greatest should become as the youngest, 'a child' (cf. Luke 9:48); the leader as one who serves (cf. Luke 17:10). For Jesus is among them as one who serves (Luke 22:24-27). This attitude of service explains Jesus' responses at his temptation (Luke 4:1-12). Also only Luke reports Jesus' refusal to allow James and John to call down fire from heaven to destroy the Samaritan town (Luke 9:54-55) as Elijah did to the soldiers of Ahaziah (2 Kings 1:10, 12). Jesus merits the title servant (pias; Acts 3:13, 26; 4:27, 30). The apostles appoint the Seven to serve tables (Acts 6:2-3, 6); they will devote themselves to the service of the word (Acts 6:4). Paul, a model for Christians, in his farewell to the Ephesian elders recalls that his ministry in Asia was spent serving the Lord with humility (Acts 20:18-19). The resurrected Christ appoints Paul a servant. This directive of humble service governs every Christian. (Cassidy/Scharper, 1983, p. 9)

3) Sacrificial Commitment: From church history comes this challenging story of one man, Telemachus, whose service for Christ led to martyrdom for him, but life for thousands.

One day as the monk Telemachus was meditating in his monastery in Asia Minor around 400

A.D. It seemed to him that God was telling him to go to Rome. He didn't know why but he went and arrived on a day when the whole city was celebrating a victory over the Goths, and there was to be a great spectacle in the Colosseum to celebrate the victory; Caesar himself would be there. So Telemachus made his way to the Colosseum, where he learned that there were to be tremendous fights between men and beasts, men and men, and the blood would flow.

By the time this happened, Christianity had spread among the Roman masses but the old customs remained. So the Colosseum was filled with 50,000 people and the gladiators walked out and bowed low before Caesar, hailing him with the established formula, "Caesar, we who are about to die salute thee."

The crowd, stirred by the lust for blood, cheered as the gladiators began to fight. Then in a flash Telemachus sensed why he had been "sent" to Rome. He leapt to a parapet and jumped into the arena. Rushing between the gladiators he cried out in a loud voice, "In the name of Jesus Christ, forbear." But the crowd laughed. One of the gladiators hit him with the flat side of his sword and sent him sprawling; but Telemachus rushed back shouting, "In the name of Christ forbear." Someone in the balconies called out "Run him through," and a gladiator took his sword and killed brave Telemachus.

A hush over the multitude – for Christianity had taken hold of many. And in the far balcony one man rose and left, then another, and groups of people. Finally there was a surge so that in a short time the Colosseum was empty. That was the last time a gladiatorial combat was held in Rome. It was that day, and not when Constantine earlier put it on his banners, that Christianity really came to Rome.

### The Beatitudes of Bangladesh

Blessed are the humble poor whose values have not been distorted by the selfishness and materialism which exploits people and resources, for they walk in the steps of Jesus.

Blessed are those who have learnt through suffering and loss how to value and celebrate life, for they shall find their moments filled with joy and hope.

Blessed are those who though lacking both possessions and status live with dignity before God and society, for the day of their reward will come as surely as the dawn.

Blessed are those who commit their lives to spreading truth and justice throughout their communities so that all may live with hope and security, for they shall enjoy the blessing of many friends and joyful memories.

Blessed are those who in their village homes welcome the neighbor, feast the stranger, and shelter the squatter despite their poverty, for they shall be welcomed, feasted, and sheltered in heaven.

Blessed are the illiterate who are wise in the things of God and the poor who are rich in heavenly treasure, for their vision and experience of God will surpass that of the rich and the educated.

Blessed are those who know that their security does not lie in the ability to defend themselves and annihilate others but in building bridges of peace and understanding, pathways of non-violence and reconciliation, for they are the true children of the Prince of Peace.

Blessed are those who suffer the blows of exploitation, misunderstanding, humiliation, and discrimination in the causes of justice, for their stand against the self-interest, acquisitiveness, and hunger for power of the majority make them both signs and inheritors of the Kingdom.

Today Jesus still dwells with the poor and through them still speaks to the world...

For out of the ranks of the persecuted, the prophets still emerge, and the 'salt of the earth' are still blessed with heavenly wisdom.

The unencumbered still make the brightest evangelists, and selfless deeds are still recognized by God and men.

These are the lessons of the life of the poor, the beatitudes of Bangladesh. (Bellingham, 1985)

**Fig 15:1 Leadership Styles**

Domination	Very Much	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Very Little
Decision-Making	Makes All Decisions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Maximum Delegation
Dynastic	Dynastic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Encourages Otehrs According to Ability
Diversion of Resources	Diversion of Resources	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Completely Honest

**Fig 15:2 People vs Task Orientation**

P e o p l e  O r i e n t a t i o n	10											
	9											
	8											
	7											
	6											
	5											
	4											
	3											
	2											
	1											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		

Task Orientation

Figure 15.3

Development Worker Traits

Measurable/Observable Variables

- |                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Visionary                          | 1. Has high ideals and hopes for the people, believes that they are attainable.   |
| 2. Committed                          | 2. Strong commitment to people's cause. Ready to face the demands of his involvement. Has suffered injustice.   |
| 3. Human                              | 3. Acknowledges own limitations to self and to others and struggles to live up to personal ideals and values.   |
| 4. Self-worth                         | 4. Believes in self and the people; that they are worthwhile and have something to offer.   |
| 5. Analytical                         | 5. Observant and takes notes of facts. Seeks to find deeper realities behind the apparent.  |
| 6. Selfless                           | 6. Able to rise above petty interests. In the group, makes own interest subsidiary.   |
| 7. Cooperative                        | 7. Lends a helping hand to people when they are in need. No unwanted services offered.  |
| 8. Good team worker                   | 8. Approachable. Reassures people. Makes people feel at home. Receptive.  |
| 9. Strongly integrated into Community | 9. Skillful in relationships. Knows the people well.  |
| 10. Natural leader                    | 10. Good communicator. Gets people involved. Encourages them to respond, even to differ. Involves members in all activities and at all levels. Maintains enthusiasm, appreciates their efforts, and is spontaneous. |
| 11. High Endurance                    | 11. Not easily discouraged, does not compromise or give in easily. Keeps struggling.  |
| 12. Self-acknowledged deviant         | 12. Questions structures and systems. Isn't satisfied with traditional answers. Searches for viable alternatives.   |
| 13. Creative                          | 13. Resourceful and innovative. Does not let discussions flag. Entertains new ideas.  |

14. Non dogmatic

14. Does not impose own ideas and beliefs. Does not argue all the time about what the point is, but rather listens to what others have to say.

TRANSFORMATION: THE DEMOCRATIC MODEL  
STUDY 16: SPIRITUAL GIFTS AND COMMUNITY MINISTRIES

Spiritual Gifts

In the New testament a great variety of gifts are listed. The apostle Peter stressed that, “every Christian has been given a gift” (1 Pet. 4:10). The New Testament gifts can helpfully be grouped into three categories.

1) Ability in Communication (“telling”)

- a) Word of WISDOM – logos sophias (1 Cor. 12:8). Ability to express spiritual truth.
- b) Word of KNOWLEDGE – logos gnoseos (1 Cor. 12:8). Ability to express understanding.
- c) PROPHECY – Prophetess, prophet (1 Cor. 12:10). ability to declare God's message with relevance to a given situation.
- d) TEACHING – didaskalos, teacher (Rom. 12:7). Ability to transmit spiritual principles.
- e) EXHORTATION – paraklesis, encouragement (Rom. 12:8). Ability to encourage and stimulate spiritual growth.
- f) SPEAKING – laleo, speak (1 Pet. 4:11). Ability to give forth the Word of God.
- g) APOSTLE – apostolos, sent one, missionary (Eph. 4:11) Ability to give forth the Word of God.
- h) EVANGELIST – evangelistes, messenger of good news (Eph. 4:11). Ability to effectively declare the Gospel.

Estimate how much these gifts are used by a) your church, b) your organization, and c) you.

2) Ability in Administration (“doing”)

- a) SERVICE – diakonia (Rom. 12:7). ability in practical matters of helping those in need.
- b) PASTOR – poimen, shepherd (Eph. 4:11). Caring for the spiritual well-being of others.
- c) GIVING – metadidomi, give a share of (Rom 12:8). Ability to contribute wisely.
- d) RULING – prostomi, to stand before (Rom. 12:8). Leadership ability.
- e) ACTS OF MERCY – eleo, feel sympathy (Rom. 12:8). Ability to comfort, sustain, help in time of need.
- f) FAITH – pistis, trust involving commitment (1 Cor. 12:9). Ability to exercise creative faith for God's supply, both spiritual and material.
- g) HELPS – antilempsis, taking hold of, to support (1 Cor. 12:28). Assisting another.
- h) ADMINISTRATION – kubernesis, guidance, steering (1 Cor. 12:28). Ability to organize, plan.

Repeat the first exercise with this list also. In addition, for both lists place a question mark beside any gift you don't understand, an exclamation mark beside any gift you disagree with, and a full stop beside any which you think no longer applies.

3) Ability in Demonstration (“Showing”)

- a) HEALING – iaomai, effect a cure (1 Cor. 12:9). Being a channel for God's power to heal others.
- b) MIRACLES – dunamis, power (1 Cor. 12:10). Ability to trust God for an indication of His supernatural power.
- c) DISCERN SPIRITS – diakrisis pneumation (1 Cor. 12:10). Ability to discriminate spirits.
- d) TONGUES – gene glosson, kinds of tongues (1 Cor. 12:10). Ability to express praise to god in an unknown tongue.
- e) INTERPRETATION OF TONGUES – hermenia glosson (1 Cor. 12:10). Ability to explain the meaning of a message given in tongues.



- f) CONTINENCE – (1 Cor. 7:7). Exercising self-restraint (i.e. marriage).  
 g) MARTYDOM – marturia (1 Cor. 13:3). Dying for the cause of the Kingdom.  
 Repeat both exercises for the gifts of showing also.

For the following people in the church and community, which gifts are most necessary?  
 Minister, community worker, missionary, politician, youth leader, landowner/employer, pastoral committee member, teacher.

#### Other Gifts

The above list is not intended to be exhaustive. Other gifts needed in church and community might be:

- a) Bilingualism – the ability to speak in two or more languages.
- b) Counseling – the skill of listening responsively.
- c) Accounting – an understanding of finance and how to use it most effectively.
- d) Commitment – the demonstration of love and fidelity in marriage.
- e) Integrity – Strength to withstand temptation.
- f) Prayerfulness – the ministry of seeking God's blessing for other people.

Suggest two other gifts which God has given to you or people you know.

Paul sums up the New Testament teaching on gifts:

There are different kinds of gifts – charismata (1 Cor. 12:4).

There are different types of service – diakonia (1 Cor. 12:5).

There are different ways of working – energemata (1 Cor. 12:6).

The overwhelming evidence of the New Testament is that everyone was encouraged to contribute to the life of the Christian community – and they did so, joyously and effectively.

Are the spiritual gifts only for use in the church or also for ministry in the wider community?  
 List three reasons for your decision.

#### The Nature of Community

People have pictured the church and the community of the Kingdom in various ways. Here are some examples:

- A Body – Individuals are cells in the body.  
 The same life sustains all the cells.  
 The cells may be different.  
 All are important.  
 If one hurts, all feel the pain.
- A Beehive - Each comb is built on the previous layer  
 All honey cells are the same size  
 All are built on the same foundation  
 There is only one entrance to the hive.
- A Building - A building is a meeting and sharing place.  
 It needs strong materials.  
 It requires good cement.  
 It offers protection to young and old.  
 A building needs a designer and builder.
- An Atom - There is one nucleus/center in an atom.

All electrons revolve around the nucleus.

Electrons are related to each other.

Atoms are dynamic not static.

Atoms constantly seek completion.

A Triangle - A community has symmetry.

All units are part of adjoining units.

If an individual is not linked to the community, either he/she or the community is incomplete.

Note some strengths and weaknesses of each picture.

### Community Needs

Here it is necessary to link discussion of gifts in the community building to needs of individuals and groups. Abraham Maslow gave the classic definition of needs when he suggested they form a hierarchy. Lower order needs must be satisfied before higher level needs are experienced. At any point in time the need being felt will provide motivation for meeting it. His hierarchy was as follows:

Self-Actualization - to be fulfilled

Esteem - to be valued

Social - to be part of a community

Safety - to be secure from danger

Physical - to have food and shelter

List specific illustrations of each level. Then draw a line where a community you know functions on this scale. What is the name of the community?

### Spiritual Gifts and Discipling

A Christian equivalent to Maslow's scale has been developed to measure the typical stages through which a people group progresses as they come to Christ, join the church, and share their faith with others. It is called the "Engels Scale." For each step write the gifts which best minister to the people in that stage of spiritual growth.

1. Have no awareness of Christianity.
2. Have awareness of the existence of Christianity.
3. Have some knowledge of the Gospel
4. Understand the message of the Gospel.
5. See the personal implications of the Gospel.
6. Recognize a personal need that the Gospel can meet.
7. Are being challenged to receive Christ.
8. Have decided for Christ but are not incorporated into a fellowship.
9. Are incorporated into a fellowship of Christians.
10. Are active propagators of the Gospel.

Add any other gifts which might be important to minister to people at any stage of this process. Select a people group you know and estimate the percentage of people who are at each stage on the above scale. Now write a brief strategy statement on what your church needs to do to minister effectively to these people.

### Community Development

Note that the word "values" is written in the center of Figure 16.1, which pictures a community.

Why would values be central to community development?

Process of Value Change

An alternative to the Engels Scale is to emphasize that becoming a Christian involves value change. According to a scale developed by Sugden and Samuel, transformation should occur in the following areas.

<u>Value</u>	<u>Distorted Expression</u>	<u>Christ-like Expression</u>
Loyalty	Only to our family	To all people
Uniqueness of Individual	Only the powerful matter	All men and women matter
Compassion	Only to those that can help you	To those who are in need
Repentance	Only if caught	Personal responsibility for wrong
Forgiveness	Only to one's equals	To all who injure you
Servanthood	Only to one's superiors	To all
Sharing	Only with our family	With all who are in need
Equality	Among men who own land	Among all men and women
Justice	Owed only to the powerful	Owed to all, even the weakest
Peacemaking	Within the family	Within the whole community

Actions which express values:

<u>Actions</u>	<u>Example of World's Values</u>	<u>Examples of Christian Values</u>
Decision making	Only the wealthy involved	Everyone has same role
Information sharing	Only the educated or only the powerful	Everyone who needs to know is informed
Relief assistance	Leader's families first or Christians only	The neediest helped first
Job opportunities	Only for those who can pay	Those who are qualified

or only for family members

Treatment of people	Some people as outcasts	All people are valued
Prayer	Concerning money, power, other goods	To Jesus
Importance of religion	Not much, except on special occasions	Permeates every area of life
Family decisions	Only parents involved	Every family member has some role

### Conclusion

This study closes with a short story

#### He Needs Them All

The Carpenter's tools had a conference. Brother Hammer was in the chair. The meeting had informed him that he must leave because he was too noisy. But he said, "If I am to leave this carpenter's shop, Brother Gimlet must go too; he is so insignificant that he makes very little impression."

Little Brother Gimlet arose and said, "Alright, Brother Screw must also go; you have to turn him around and around, again and again, to get him anywhere."

Brother Screw then said, "If you wish I will go, but Brother Plane must leave also; all his work is on the surface, there is no depth to it."

To this Brother Plane replied, "Well, Brother Rule will have to withdraw if I do, for he is always measuring other folks as though he were the only one who is right."

Brother Rule then complained against Brother Sandpaper and said, "He is rougher than he ought to be and he rubs people the wrong way."

In the midst of this discussion the Carpenter of Nazareth walked in. He had come to perform His day's work. He put on His apron and went to the bench to make a pulpit. He employed the screw, the gimlet, the sandpaper, the saw, the hammer, the plane, and all the other tools. After the day's work was over and the pulpit was finished, Brother Saw arose and said, "Brethren, I perceive that all of us are laborers together with God."

Oh, how many of us Christians are just like those tools – fussing at others because they don't do things just the way we think they should.

There was not an accusation against any of those tools that was not absolutely true; yet the Carpenter used every one of them. There was not a place where He used any one that any other would have done at all. How careful we should be to guard against finding faults with any of God's tools.

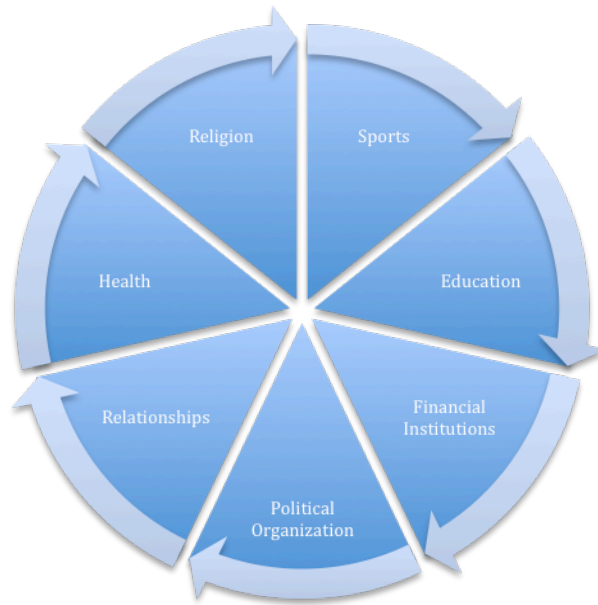


Figure 16:1 Dimensions of Community





## TRANSFORMATION: THE STRATEGY OF MISSION

### STUDY 17: GOOD NEWS IN THE CITY

#### Paul the Strategist

Paul was a master strategist. Before he was a Christian he gathered information, exerted power, built an image, traveled the country, and exercised authority in an effort to stamp out Christianity. It was no fault of his strategy that he failed – he almost succeeded, but God had other plans for the world and for Paul. He wanted both changed. So from being the archenemy of Christians, Paul became the great spreader of Christianity. His strategy of mission has continuing lessons for the task of transformation today especially in relation to cities.

But what is strategy? It is defined in the dictionary as “a scheme for achieving some purpose or end” and “skill in managing or planning.” So strategy is both the plan of action and the implementation of the plan. Paul's goal was to reach the world with the news that God was offering salvation to all in Christ. His strategy was to travel to the cities of the Roman empire, preach the gospel at every opportunity, use the trading and tourist networks to spread the message, write to all the churches to instruct and encourage them, and pray daily for all the believers.

Do you agree with the following statement about strategy?

The greatest deterrent to the success of Christian mission has never been the barriers of pagan culture but the lack of strategic planning and the failure to set goals. Strategy is planning, taking aim at a particular target and moving consciously toward it.

(Cervin, 1977, p. 99)

In the book A Socio-Theology of Letting Go Marian Neal notes that strategies for transforming the world depend on an individual's understanding of the world. Which of the following perceptions of the world do you think Paul had, you have, and your church has?

1. Depending on our way of defining the world, we choose our strategy for making choices within it. First, if we perceive it to be all right the way it is – that is, if it is alright for us and not too threatening to our political, economic, and social class interests – we act to preserve it. Our concern may very well be that people become holy, but holy will mean living in harmony.
2. If we perceive the world as needing reform, we will strive through educational, religious, and recreational programs and models so to change the consciousness of the people, that the system will work differently. Our definition of holy will include outreach.
3. If we perceive that the world's interlocking systems have outlived their usefulness as channels of human energy toward human development then we will no longer be able to exert our energies in the direction of social control or social reform but only, if at all, in the direction of social change. We will do this when we discover that by keeping the rules we have devised, people suffer.

(1984, p. 92)



## Issues in Missions

Paul's mission strategy focused on three things: issues, cities, and people. The main issues for Paul were:

1) Revelation: Mission is based on the conviction that there is something special to share. Wherever the authority of the scripture has been questioned mission has declined. Church growth studies always include a firm belief in the bible as the revealed word of God as one of the key factors to real growth. There is no doubt that Paul shared this belief. In his first recorded mission sermon he quoted five Old Testament passages to substantiate his argument. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness," he assured Timothy who from childhood had "known the Holy Scriptures which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 3:15-16). Paul had a thorough knowledge of and confidence in the uniqueness of the scriptures as God's revelation to the world.

2) Proclamation: In an age when travel was much more difficult than it is now, Paul covered remarkable distances. The driving force behind his three great missionary journeys was the desire to share the good news of the Gospel with as many people in as many places as humanly possible. "The love of Christ constrains me," he explained. Acts 13 records his travel through Cyprus, Pamphylia, Pisidia, Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe Lystra, Iconium, Antioch, Perga, Attalia, Antioch, Jerusalem, and Antioch. On the second and third journeys he traveled yet further, eventually reaching Rome, the heart of the empire. At every place he preached in synagogues, homes, rented halls, and market places. He was also called to court and palaces to explain his views and actions.

3) Salvation: Paul really had only message: the message for which Stephen was stoned to death and Paul was imprisoned, beaten, stoned, and left to die. That message was "to preach Christ and Him crucified...the power of God unto salvation".

"There is," he said, "only one name given under heaven whereby men might be saved, the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." "I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus Christ," he said in his farewell speech to the elders at Ephesus.

4) Contextualization: While the essence of Paul's message remained unchanged the ideas he used to convey it were adapted to the audience and location. So to Jews he could argue that Jesus was the Christ by tracing God's purpose in history from the calling of Abraham to the present. In Athens where many, "spent their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to the latest ideas" (Acts 17:21) Paul quoted from the Greek poets. At times he was a Jew and others a Gentile and finally a Roman citizen. He was "all things to all men in order to win some." He used some very graphic imagery such as the athlete on the starting blocks, straining to reach the tape, and receiving the victor's prize. Another vivid picture was of a soldier clothed from head to foot in the distinctive and impressive armor of Caesar's army.

Put in marketing terms, Paul had a first class, very valuable product to sell. He was 100 percent convinced of its value. Because he had enjoyed its benefits in his own experience, he sought with all his energy to share it with others everywhere. At each place Paul researched his audience and presented his product in terms they were most likely to understand and appreciate. While some still rejected his offer, thousands accepted. He then trained them as

“salesmen” and organized them into “demonstration centers” and “marketing groups”. By the end of his career, Paul had established churches throughout the Roman empire with whom he constantly kept in touch and encouraged through correspondence and personal visits.

Is it irreligious to speak of “marketing the Gospel”? Other possible analogies are building and gardening. Write a short paragraph on Paul's approach using these images.

### Strategic Cities

The Lausanne Committee report on large cities edited by Dr. Ray Bakke of Chicago, notes the following:

The progression of the Bible is from a garden to an eternal city. We are said to have an urban future. The Bible includes over 1,200 references to cities and the biblical rationale and resources for the urban mission of the church are drawn from both Testaments...at least 119 cities can be found in the biblical record. Case studies of major cities in various contexts suggests a biblical theology of 'place' should be included in our theological understanding alongside that of 'program' and 'persons'. Consider for example the record of God's dealing with these four cities, briefly summarized

Sodom – Genesis 18 & 19, Ezekiel 16:48ff

- 1) God sees the behavior of cities.
- 2) There is a godly motive for urban concern (i.e. Abraham's prayer).
- 3) There is a relationship between the presence of the godly and preservation of the city (ten righteous could have saved it).
- 4) God can distinguish the one from the many – he could distinguish Lot from the rest (as Rahab in Jericho).
- 5) An escape theology is not enough to guide those who flee the city. The primary evil is not environmental. It is personal, within us (Genesis 19 & Mark 7)
- 6) One biblically stated reason for Sodom's destruction is given in Ezekiel 16:48-50. In addition to being haughty, Sodom was wealthy and did not take sufficient care of her urban poor, and God says He hates that. Is there a city today without the disparity between the haves and have-nots?

Nineveh – c.f. Jonah and Nahum

- 1) Note god's struggle to get a message and messenger to an ancient capital city.
- 2) Observe God's concern in this case for the city as a place – no names are mentioned.
- 3) Given the record of Assyrian conquest and destruction in Israel's history, Jonah is a missionary story of grace for the chief of sinful urban systems.
- 4) God accepts the repentance of Nineveh, graciously forgiving those who sought Him, in spite of Jonah's motives and conduct.
- 5) Notice that Nahum later reports God's judgment and woe on Nineveh, perhaps because the repentance was only temporary and to 'save their own necks.' One can only speculate about what might have happened if Jonah's revival had been followed up with discipleship training and national reconciliation with Israel.

Babylon – c.f. Daniel, plus many other passages.

- 1) This city functions as a corporate Judas, cutting off the temple, destroying Jerusalem, and ending the monarchy.
- 2) God provides choice Hebrew sons who function within the structures (if not the lifestyle) of the palace, and who master the pagan culture of the urban captives, yet meanwhile carefully separating their own faith from their culture, their convictions from their opinions (Dan. 1:8, 17 f).
- 3) While in Babylon Daniel received the God-given vision of protecting angels which stand behind the government official and his service.
- 4) Was it not in urban captivity that diaspora Judaism developed (in Babylon and in Alexandria)? This eventually led to the translation of the Old Testament and the commentaries, and the development of the synagogue, which in turn influenced the rapid spread of Christianity amid the Greek-speaking cities of the Roman world after Pentecost.
- 5) Was it not the Lord who instructed the Israelites residing in Babylon? He in fact, had sent them into the city, and, as urban dwellers, they were to live in that culture with their families and 'seek the welfare of the city...and pray to the Lord on its behalf for in its welfare you will find your welfare' (Jer. 29:7). Thus God's grace was not denied to this city, which was so evil in fact and reputation that it could serve as a code name for Rome in the Revelation of the New Testament.

Jerusalem – Literally hundreds of texts in both Testaments refer to this city.

- 1) There is a 1,100 year biblical record of God's grace shown the city from its capture by David to its destruction by Titus in '70 A..D.
- 2) The list of the range of ministries performed by faithful (and unfaithful) servants is a lengthy one and is found in both Testaments.
- 3) Jerusalem and other cities are reviewed by God and judged according to their behavior (Lam. 1:1ff); but even amid the post-discipline ruling of the city the prophet can see the merciful hand of God (Lam. 3:21ff) giving hope to the godly.
- 4) Jesus is recorded to have wept out of compassion for this city (Mt. 23:37-39, Lk. 19:41-44) whose destruction He so dramatically described.

### Modern Cities

In 1984 a seminar led by Dr. Ray Bakke examined mission to an Asian city. The resulting newsletter described the city in the following words.

- 1) The Challenge of Bangalore: Bangalore is Asia's fastest growing city, and its evolution has thrown up some special problems of identity. Every city is identified by the function it has in the life of the nation. Thus Delhi is the administrative city, Bombay the industrial and port-city, and Agra the historic city. But Bangalore is all these and more. As state capital it is administrative, a fast growing industrial infrastructure shows it is industrial, and judging by its widely varied population it is very cosmopolitan. The process of growth and change still goes on and it is inevitable that Asia's fastest growing city finds itself at a crossroads. The direction of the change will determine the quality of life in the future. Christians must understand the forces shaping the city, and seek to influence its destiny. The time for such involvement is NOW. "We shall have no right to lament the sins of the city in the future if we do not seek the salvation of the city now."

**This next section needs to be updated as UN data here is projections from 1986 - see page 342**

2) The Growth of Cities. In 1850 there were only four cities with more than one million inhabitants. By 1900 there were 19, and by 1975, 149. The world's urban population is growing at the rate of 6.5 percent per year, three times the overall growth rate. The following references describe this urban explosion.

The world's urban population will grow by 2 billion by the year 2025 according to the United nation's 1986 State of the World Population Report. Most of the growth will occur in the developing world, where the urban population by increase from 1.2 billion to 3.9 billion, the report said. By the year 2000, this growing urbanization will create five 'supercities', four of them in the third world, with populations of 16 million or more.

### Poverty in the City

An April 1987 article entitled “Dhaka Becomes supercity by Century End” in the Bangladesh Observer, Bangladesh’s widest-circulating English newspaper, quoting International Labor Organization sources, said,

The world will have six super-cities with populations topping 15 million by the end of the century...

The majority of these cities would be in developing countries with Mexico City by far the most populous with 26 million.

...greater Tokyo would be home to 17 million with 16 million in Calcutta, 15 million in New York, 13 million in Cairo, 12 million in Karachi, 11 million in Los Angeles, Dhaka, and Manila.

Overall the urban population of developing countries would be 1,969 million by the end of the century, up from 666 million in 1970.

Over the same period, urban populations in developed countries will have risen from 695 to 992 million...the population boom partly due to workers coming to the cities to look for work....economic distortions between urban and rural centers should be eliminated by reducing subsidized services in cities and by making it easier for people to move or to stay in the countryside.

What are the reasons for the population growth of your nearest city?

While the Old Testament speaks primarily to the issue of rural poverty (see Equality Model), in Paul's writing it is in the city that the poor are found. Both are present today, but the experience of poverty differs between the city and the country. Paul took up a collection for the Christian urban poor (see Sharing Model). The experience of poverty in the city includes...

1) Growing Pains: While in Europe and North America large cities are either static or decreasing in size, in the Third World they are increasing at more than twice the birth rate. Capital cities receive the highest percentage of new city dwellers so their grow rate may register increases of up to 25 percent annually. Bangkok, for instance is now 32 times larger than Thailand's second city, Chiang Mai. This exponential growth places tremendous pressures on every resource – land, accommodation, transport, sanitation, water, and food. The quality of life suffers.

2) Migrant Minorities: In all large Indian cities there are settlements of migrant workers from other states. Fleeing from rural poverty they often occupy squalid shelters and can only find menial low paying jobs. The different language groups usually cluster together so that one slum may contain several different ethnic, linguistic, cultural, and religious groups.

3) Slum Settlements: Bangalore has 170 slums. The consensus among urban sociologists and planners is that slums are an unavoidable part of the cityscape

because they provide a high density labor pool to perform essential services. While they may seem parasitic on business and luxury housing areas, both depend on the functions they perform; slums are complementary.

4) Lack of Services: The high growth rate of modern Third world Cities and the strained economics of which they are part, combine to make it impossible for services to keep up with population. Settlement precedes services, sometimes by many years.

While not all Christians are called personally to ministry in the slums of Asia's cities, everyone who wants to demonstrate the compassion of God and follow in the footsteps of Jesus is challenged to share the Good News with the poor. What is the slum settlement, migrant group, hostel, army camp, prison nearest to where you live? What ministries are conducted among these groups?

### Ministries in the Cities

The COWE report on "Reaching Large Cities" suggests that the following principles should determine today's strategy of mission.

1. The principle of materialism. The Bible begins with creation and concludes with the recreation of matter and centers on the resurrection of real bodies, Christ's and ours. Moreover, the first gifts of the spirit mentioned in the Bible (arts and crafts design) were given to Bezaleel and Aholiab (ex. 31:1ff) for work on a physical worship center among people who already had the fire and cloud of the Spirit's presence. Among other things, we conclude from such passages that Christianity is the only religion that truly integrates matter and spirit in a coherent way. Only Christianity can seek effectively the holism of the city both structurally and spiritually, institutionally as well as individually.

2. The principle of corporate solidarity. In the Bible, people are identified by families and places. People have identity in the land and are often in the cities. Moreover, cities too have corporate solidarity with suburbs and towns (c.f. Ezek. 16 where several cities are described in personal terms). Hence the idea that a Christian can stay in a place (a city or a suburb) and not take responsibility for it is denied by such passages.

3. The principle of incarnation. The principle of Jesus was to 'become flesh and dwell among us' (John 1:14). His life and ministry pattern, and implicit principles derived from that, suggest international styles of urban presence and witness. His two-day stay with the newly-forgiven Samaritan sinners (John 4:40) is further illustration of this. Impersonal media ministries are no substitute for physical presence in the city. This principle addressed the "use relationships" many Christian churches and organizations have to cities, wherein they locate in a city for convenience and use its services without any sense of responsibility for the well-being of that city and without any real witness or service to its people or its institutions. Others who minister in the city have shown a tendency to exaggerate its problems for funding purposes.

4. The principle of hope. The Gospel is 'news' not advice; not some

paternalistic announcement of something the urban multitudes must do in order to be saved, but news that something redemptive has been done for them by Jesus Christ on the cross. Such news transforms persons and environments with enormously powerful urban consequences (c.f. Acts 17:6ff), wherein those who have repented, experienced forgiveness and the Spirit's indwelling, will work out that salvation on a wide-ranging urban agenda and with incredible spiritual and social consequences. Such hope reminds us that the salvation of the city is ultimately Christ's return and intervention, but such hope also propels us into continuous urban mission.

In summary, then, we remind Christians dwelling in large cities everywhere, that God has not left us defenseless. He has given us an amazing array of biblical resources for the task of missions and evangelization in the large and growing urban centers of our day. Jesus Himself displayed multiple strategies in His visiting, teaching, preaching, and healing ministry in the small cities of His day (Mt. 9:35-38)

Discuss the implications of each of these principles with as many applications as possible, or make one in-depth application of each principle.

### Mission Strategy

At the end of the COWE report after a survey of lessons from evangelism in all corners of the earth some general conclusions are reached.

1. Major hindrances to the effective evangelization of large city dwellers:
  - a) Lack of cooperation between churches and between church and parachurch organizations, resulting in waste of limited resources
  - b) The church is viewed by many as an unattractive option, or as lacking credibility by non-Christians because there is often a loss of spiritual vitality, evangelism has ceased to be a priority for many church, and because some churches lack sensitivity to the basic human needs for food, clothing, housing, etc.
  - c) Untrained church leadership (lay and clergy) often lack the ability to cope with complex urban society.
  - d) Forms of outreach abound, but systematic analysis of effectiveness seldom accompanies.
  
2. Some emerging generalizations on strategy:
  - a) The family is central. Successful evangelism takes into account the special needs of, and dynamics surrounding, urban families.
  - b) Neighborhood housing units and interpersonal witness are the successful conversion strategies most often cited.
  - c) Mass media with western content is often used, seldom critiqued, yet is frequently reported to be largely ineffective.
  - d) No one generalization emerged with such clarity on all continents as the affirmation that the local church is the key to evangelism, and its revitalization is everyone's concern.

Are you, your church, or your organization implementing any of the above strategies and

recommendations? Do you agree on the major hindrances? Are there others in your context?

In a consultation on “Understanding the City” in Bangalore in July 1984, 120 delegates recommended the following blueprint for further planning and action.

1. Print a four-page newsletter containing news, theology of ministry to cities, case studies, etc. and circulate to key Christian leaders in India's 19 major cities.
2. Survey ministries in Bangalore's slums.
3. Prepare a slide presentation and study guide of the various ministries in Bangalore.
4. Publish a list of barriers to ministry, and solution and send to all churches in Bangalore.
5. Send a letter and summary of the conference to all the participants, churches, and Christian agencies in the city.
6. Organize consultations in different areas of Bangalore to share God's concern for the city.
7. Promote a “festival of Ministries” or a seminar on “Models of Ministry to the City” for 1985.
8. Write up case studies of effective ministries.
9. Develop closer relationships with other cities.
10. Explore ministries in prisons, military camps, new industrial areas, etc.

What similar strategies have been implemented in your city? What could be done? Renumber the above items in order of priority for your city.

### Using Networks

Individuals find their identities and express their personalities within three primary networks.

1) Biological Network: Every person is a part of a family, and is related by blood or marriage to a large number of persons spanning three or four generations. The family network can be used to reach people for Christ by choosing one or two members from the family and ministering to them after identifying their special needs. They can then minister to their own family. Family events such as weddings, funerals, and parties provide opportunities for witnessing. (Figure 17.1)

2) Geographical Network: The area of residence of the family puts them in contact with neighbors and the people who provide services for that community. Shopkeepers and government officials may become friends through regular contact. Parents, through their children, come in contact with school teachers and hospital staff. These people with whom Christians must interact out of necessity can also become the focus of our witness. (Figure 17.2)

3) Vocational Network: Rural folk find identity within their biological and geographical network. But city dwellers generally see themselves in terms of what they do. They identify with their profession or vocation. To the question “Who are you” most will answer “I am a teacher,” or “a clerk,” or “a manager.” Christianity has always taken a positive view of work. If a person's identity is in the office, the church must minister to him or her there. (Figure 17.3).

List alongside Figure 17.1 your relatives, alongside Figure 17.2 your local regular acquaintances, and alongside Figure 17.3 your professional colleagues. State how, where, and when you have, and can, share your faith and vision with them.

The application of this study is focused on evangelism in the city. Do you agree with the claim of some Christian leaders, “Evangelism is the most effective form of social transformation”? If



yes, give three examples of personal transformation leading to social transformation. If no, use the materials in this study to outline specific strategies needed to achieve social transformation in each situation.

Some people using this study may have lived for most or all of their lives in a rural area and thus found answering the questions difficult. For everyone, however, the issues are important. Jacques Ellul, a contemporary Christian social philosopher claims, "We are in the city, even if we live in the country, for today the country is only an annex of the city" (Padilla, 1985, p. 46).

### The Urgency of the Mission

Unfortunately despite the importance of the task and the urgency of the time the following story is often true.

There were four people named Everybody, Somebody, Anybody, and Nobody. There was an important job to be done and Everybody was asked to do it. Everybody was sure that Somebody would do it. Anybody could have done it but Nobody did it. Somebody got angry about that because it was Everybody's job. Everybody thought Anybody could do it, but Nobody realized that Everybody wouldn't do it. It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody when actually Nobody asked Anybody.

**Figures for Chapter 17 missing in hard copy**

## STUDY 18: MARRYING EVANGELISM AND SOCIAL ACTION

### Introduction

This study looks at a number of statements which seek to explain the relationship between evangelism and social action. They are taken in historical order to help identify emerging convictions on this topic, though the statements come from different groups, contexts, and theological traditions.

### Salvation Includes Social Action

The paragraph on “Christian Social Responsibility” in the Lausanne covenant 1974, states:

We affirm that god is both the Creator and the Judge of all men. We therefore should share His concern for justice and reconciliation throughout human society and for the liberation of men from every kind of oppression. Because mankind is made in the image of god, every person, regardless of race, religion, color, culture, class, sex or age, has an intrinsic dignity because of which he should be respected and served, not exploited.

Here too we express penitence both for our neglect and for having sometimes regarded evangelism and social concern as mutually exclusive. Although reconciliation with man is not reconciliation with God, nor is social action evangelism, nor is political liberation salvation, nevertheless we affirm that evangelism and socio-political involvement are both part of our Christian duty. For both are necessary expressions of our doctrines of god and man, our love for our neighbor and our obedience to Jesus Christ. The message of salvation implies also a message of judgment upon every form of alienation, oppression and discrimination, and we should not be afraid to denounce evil and injustice wherever they exist. When people receive Christ they are born again into His Kingdom and must seek not only to exhibit, but also to spread its righteousness, in the midst of an unrighteous world. The salvation we claim should be transforming us in the totality of our personal and social responsibilities. Faith without works is dead.

Note how many descriptions of social involvement in society this paragraph contains. Other social terms used are justice, reconciliation, liberation, alienation, oppression, discrimination, and righteousness. Give definitions for these terms.

### Three Kinds of Relationships

The CRESR Report of 1982 states that there is not just one relationship linking evangelism and social responsibility but three kinds of relationships.

First, social activity is a consequence of evangelism. That is, evangelism is the means by which God brings people to new birth, and their new life manifests itself in the service of others. Paul wrote that 'faith works through love' (Gal 5:6); James wrote that 'I will show you my faith by my works' (James 2:10); and John that god's love within us will overflow in serving our needy brothers and sisters (1 John 2:16-18). As Robert E. Speer wrote about the Gospel in 1900: 'Wherever it goes, it plants in the hearts of men forces that produce new lives; it plants in the communities of men forces that create new social combinations.'

We have heard of evangelists in our day who, during their missions or crusades actively encourage Christians (including new converts) to become involved in programs to meet specific local, human needs. This effectively highlights the serving dimension of Christian conversion commitment.

We can go further than this, however, social responsibility is more than the consequence of evangelism; it is also one its principal aims. For Christ gave Himself for us not only 'to redeem us from all iniquity' but also 'to purify for Himself a people of His own who are zealous for good deeds' (Tit. 2:15). Similarly, through the Gospel we are 'created in Christ Jesus for good works which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them' (Eph 2:10). Good works cannot save, but they are indispensable evidence of salvation (James 2:4-26).

In saying this, we are not claiming that compassionate service is an automatic consequence of evangelism or of conversion, however. Social responsibility, like evangelism should therefore be included in the teaching ministry of the church. For we have to confess the inconsistencies in our own lives and the dismal record of evangelical failure, often as a result of the cultural blind-spots to which we have already referred. This has grave consequences. When we do not allow the Word of God to transform us in all areas of our personal and social life, we seem to validate the Marxist criticism of religion.

Secondly, social activity can be a bridge to evangelism. It can break down prejudice and suspicion, open closed doors, and gain a hearing for the Gospel. Jesus Himself sometimes performed works of mercy before proclaiming the Good News of the Kingdom. In more recent times, we were reminded, the construction of dams by the Basel missionaries in Northern Ghana opened a way for the gospel, and much missionary medical, agricultural, nutritional, and educational work has had a similar effect.

To add a contemporary western example,. A recent crusade in an American city was preceded and accompanied by a 'Love in Action' program, with the evangelist's encouragement. Several 'social uplift' groups cooperated and were able to extend their ministries to the inner city poor. As a result, we were told, a number of people came under the sound of the Gospel who would not otherwise have come to the crusade. Further, by seeking to serve people, it is possible to move from their 'felt needs' to their deeper needs concerning their relationship with God. Whereas, as another participant put it, 'If we turn a blind eye to the suffering, the social oppression, the alienation, and loneliness of people, let us not be surprised if they turn a deaf ear to our message of eternal salvation"

We are aware of the danger of making 'rice Christians,' that is, of securing converts only because of the physical benefits we offer. But we have to take this risk, so long as we retain our own integrity and serve people out of genuine love and not with an ulterior motive. Then our actions will be 'not bribes but bridges – bridges of love to the world.'

Thirdly, social activity not only follows evangelism as its consequence and gain, and precedes it as its bridge, but also accompanies it as its partner. They are like the two blades of a pair of scissors or the two wings of a bird. This partnership is clearly seen in the public ministry of Jesus, who not only preached the Gospel, but fed the hungry and healed the sick. In his ministry, *kerygma* (proclamation) and *diakonia* (service) went hand in hand. His words explained His works, and His works dramatized his words. Both were expressions of His compassion for people, and both should be of ours. Both also issue from the lordship of Jesus, for He sends us out in to the world both to preach and to serve. If we proclaim the good news of God's love, we must manifest His love in caring for the needy. Indeed, so close is this link between proclaiming and serving, that they actually overlap.

This is not to say that they should be identified with each other, for evangelism is not social responsibility, nor is social responsibility evangelism. Yet, each involves the other.

To proclaim Jesus as Lord and Savior (evangelism) has social implications, since it summons people to repent of social as well as personal sins, and to live a new life of righteousness and peace in the new society which challenges the old.

To give food to the hungry (social responsibility) has evangelistic implications, since good works of love, if done in the name of Christ, are a demonstration and commendation of the Gospel. It has been said, therefore, that evangelism, even when it does not have a primarily social intention, nevertheless has a social dimension, while social responsibility even when it does not have a primarily evangelistic intention, nevertheless has an evangelistic dimension. Thus evangelism and social responsibility, while distinct from one another are integrally related in our proclamation of and obedience to the gospel. The partnership is, in reality, a marriage.

Give illustrations, preferably from personal experience, for each type of relationship: 1) consequence, 2) bridge, and 3) partner. Is this a good distinction? If not, suggest further clarification.

### An Inclusive Evangelistic Calling

From "Mission and Evangelism: An Ecumenical Affirmation 1982" comes this view.

The biblical promise of a new earth and a new heaven where love, peace, and justice will prevail (Ps. 85:7-13, Is. 32:17-18, Is. 65:17-25, Rev. 21:1-2) invites our actions as Christians in history. The contrast of that vision with the reality of today reveals the monstrosity of human sin, the evil unleashed by the rejection of God's liberating will for humankind. Sin, alienating persons from God, neighbor, and nature, is found both in individual and corporate forms, both in slavery of the human will and in social, political, and economic structures of domination and dependence.

The church is sent into the world to call people and nations to repentance, to

announce forgiveness of sin, and a new beginning in relations with God and with neighbors through Jesus Christ. Their evangelistic calling has a new urgency today.

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In a world where the number of people who have no opportunity to know the story of Jesus is growing steadily, how necessary it is to multiply the witnessing vocation of the church!

In a world where the majority of those who do not know Jesus are the poor of the earth, those to whom He promised the Kingdom of God, how essential it is to share with them the Good News of the Kingdom!

In a world where people are struggling for justice, freedom and liberation, often without the realization of their hopes, how important it is to announce that God's Kingdom is promised to them!

In a world where the marginalized and the drop-outs of affluent society search desperately for comfort and identity in drugs or esoteric cults, how imperative it is to announce that He has come so that all may have life and may have it in all its fullness (John 10:10)

In a world where so many find little meaning, except in the relative security of their affluence, how necessary it is to hear once again Jesus' invitation to discipleship, service, and risk!

In a world where so many Christians are nominal in their commitment to Jesus Christ how necessary it is to call them again to the fervor of their first love!

In a world where wars and rumors of wars jeopardize the present and future of humankind, where an enormous part of natural resources and people are consumed in the arms race, how crucial it is to call the peace-makers blessed, convinced that God in Christ has broken all barriers and has reconciled the world to Himself (Eph. 2:14, 2 Cor. 5:19)!

In this preface there are seven descriptions of the world today. Some describe people's spiritual conditions, others their social condition. Assign the seven examples to those two categories. Many would say that evangelism is dealing with a person's spiritual conditions, social action with their social condition, and that the two are separate and distinguishable. The statement above challenges that distinction. Why and how?

### The Good News of the Gospel

In Evangelism for the Poor Vinay Samuel and Christ Sugden contribute yet another view on the relationship between evangelism and social action.

The Gospel has three inseparable components without which it ceases to be good news. First it is centered on Jesus Christ, the incarnate Lord. In Him and through His life, death, and resurrection, God is bringing about the restoration of man's relationships with God, with other men in society, and with the whole creation.

Secondly, the gospel announced and demonstrated by Jesus in His words and actions is the Gospel of the Kingdom. The Gospel is the good news of God's kingly activity centered in Christ. This kingly activity was evidenced and witnessed to in the Old Testament. God's activity in history judges all evil which alienates people from God, and which spoils God's original intention of wholeness for people and the creation. God's judgment is a servant of His grace in bringing the reconciliation of people to God and the restoration of His original purpose of wholeness. The good news of the Kingdom was therefore not just a message. It was news that the kingly activity of God was present to bring judgment on evil and restoration of His creation. This kingly activity of God would culminate at the second coming of Christ in the full and final restoration of people and society, nature and the cosmos in a new heaven and a new earth.

Thirdly, Jesus linked the good news inescapably with the poor. Those to whom he announced the good news and the way He announced it to them, were as important as the content of the good news. HE described the gospel as especially good news for the poor. It had special relevance to them. Jesus announced, demonstrated, and implemented the good news by identification and solidarity with the poor.

The writers here are emphasizing two concepts not highlighted in the previous statements: the Kingdom of God and the priority of the poor. Construct a definition of those terms.

#### Full-Orbed Mission

The penultimate paragraph of the statement made at the Wheaton '83 conference on "The Church in Response to Human Need" dealing with transformation, says:

We are challenged to commit ourselves to a truly vigorous and full-orbed mission to the world, combining explosive creativity with painstaking faithfulness in small things. Our mission and vision are to be nurtured by the whole counsel of God (2 Tim 3:16). A repentant, revived, and vigorous church will call people to true repentance and faith and at the same time equip them to challenge the forces of evil and injustice (2 Tim. 3:17). We thus move forward without either relegating salvation entirely to an eternal future or making it synonymous with a political or social dispensation to be achieved in the here and now. The Holy Spirit empowers us to serve and proclaim Him who has been raised from the dead, seated at the right hand of the Father, and given to the church as Head over all things in heaven and on earth (Eph. 1:10, 1:20-22).

This statement contains an emphasis on the Church, on repentance, and faith and on forces of evil and injustice. In this statement, salvation is not what? Salvation is what?

What vision of the future do you have? Can society get better or will it get worse? What do you think the Bible teaches about this?

### The Kingdom of God

Rene Padilla in "The Mission of the Church in the Light of the Kingdom of God" (Transformation, 1984) sees the Kingdom of God as not just including but integrating both evangelism and social responsibility. He concludes:

1. Both evangelism and social responsibility can only be understood in the light of the fact that in Jesus Christ the Kingdom of God has invaded History and is now both a present reality and a future hope, an 'already' and a 'not yet.' Accordingly, the Kingdom of God is neither 'the progressive social improvement of mankind whereby the task of the church is to transform earth like unto heaven and do it now,' nor 'the present inner rule of God in the moral and spiritual dispositions of the soul with its seat in the heart.' Is it, rather, God's redemptive power released in history bringing good news to the poor, freedom for the prisoners, sight for the blind, and liberation for the oppressed.
2. Evangelism and social responsibility are inseparable. The Gospel is good news concerning the Kingdom of God. Good works are, on the other hand, the signs of the Kingdom, for which we were created in Christ Jesus. Both word and deed are inextricably united in the mission of Jesus and His apostles, and both must continue to be held together in the mission of the church in which Jesus' mission is prolonged, until the end of the age. The Kingdom of God is not merely God's rule over the world through creation and providence (in which case it could never be regarded as inaugurated by Jesus Christ). It is God's ultimate kingship over creation which, in anticipation of the end, has become present in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Both the proclamation and the visible signs through the Church are brought about by the power of the Spirit – the agent of eschatology in the process of realization – and point to the Kingdom which has come and is yet to come. The widest and deepest human need is a personal encounter with Jesus Christ through whom the Kingdom is mediated. 'The same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on Him, for "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Rom. 10:12b, 13). From this perspective and this perspective only, "In the church's mission of sacrificial service evangelism is primary' (Lausanne Covenant, Para. 6), and the gospel must be proclaimed diligently, But the gospel is good news concerning the Kingdom, and the Kingdom is God's rule over the totality of life. Every human need, therefore, may be used by the Spirit of God as a beachhead for the manifestation of His kingly power.

That is why in actual practice the question as to what comes first, evangelism or social action, is irrelevant. In every concrete situation the needs themselves provide the guidelines for the definition of priorities. As long as both evangelism and social responsibility are regarded as essential to mission, we do not need a rule of thumb to tell us which comes first and when. On the other hand, if they are not seen as essential, the effort to understand the relationship between



them is a useless academic exercise. It would be as useless as the effort to understand the relationship between the right wing and the left wing of a plane, when one believes that the plane can fly with only one wing. And who can deny that the best way to understand the relationship between the two wings of a plane is by actually flying it, rather than by theorizing about it?

3. According to God's will, the church is called to manifest the Kingdom of God here and now in what she is as well as in what she proclaims. Because the Kingdom of God has already come and is yet to come, 'between the times' the church is both an eschatological and a historical reality. If she does not fully manifest the Kingdom, that is not because God's dynamic reign has invaded the present age 'without authority or the power of transforming it into the age to come, but because the consummation has not yet arrived.' The power which is active in the church, however, is like the working of God's mighty strength which He exerted in Christ when he raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given not only in the present age, but also in the one to come' (Eph. 1:20-21). The mission of the church is the historical manifestation of that power through word and deed ,in the power of the Holy Spirit.

4. Because of His death and resurrection, Jesus Christ has been enthroned as Lord of the universe. The whole world, therefore, has been placed under His lordship. The Church anticipates the destiny of all mankind. Between the times, therefore, the church – the community which confesses Jesus Christ as Lord and through Him acknowledges God as 'both the Creator and the Judge of all men' 0 is called to share His concern for justice and reconciliation throughout human society and for the liberation of men from every kind of oppression (Lausanne covenant, para. 5). Commitment to Jesus Christ is commitment to Him as the Lord of the universe, the King before whom every knee will bow, the final destiny of human history. But the consummation of God's kingdom is God's work. As W. Pannenberg has put it: 'The kingdom of god will not be established by man. It is most emphatically the Kingdom of God...Man is not to be exalted but degraded when he falls victim to illusions about his power.'

#### Agreement or Conflict?

Ronald Sider, in "Evangelism and Social Responsibility: Can we Agree on Their Relationship?" (Mustard Seeds, 1984) , outlines four conflicting viewpoints.

1. Evangelism is the primary mission of the church. From this perspective the gospel is individualistic, and social ministry is a response of the regenerate but entirely distinct from evangelism.

2. The primary mission of the church is the corporate body of believers. By their words, deeds, and lives together ,Christians announce the good news that it is now possible to live in a new society – the visible body of believers – where all relationships are begin transformed. The church incarnates the values of the new age in its personal, economic, and social relationships.

3. The conversion of individuals and the political restructuring of society are equally important parts of evangelism and salvation. Evangelism may be directed to groups, to power structures, and to cultural configurations of person as well as to individuals.

4. Evangelism is politics because salvation is social justice. In this view salvation and social justice are equated. Salvation in humanization.

Sider concludes that, “evangelism and social action are inseparable, distinct and equally important dimensions of the total task of the church.

Which of the four positions would you most support and why? Divide into four groups and present arguments for each position to the whole group.

In India Dr. Theodore Srinivasagam who works with the India Evangelical Mission believes that social transformation comes through evangelism. Discuss the following case studies and the conclusions he draws from them.

#### Case Study 1:

A Hindu village in Andhra Pradesh had sharp caste distinctions with the scheduled caste people living in one section and the upper caste in another section of the village. The scheduled case people were poor, without much land, ill clothed, dirty in appearance, their houses not well maintained, and very few of their children attended school.

In 1979 the Gospel was preached in that village and after constant visitation 21 people from the scheduled caste group were baptized in December of that year. Since then the number has grown, reaching today to nearly 80 baptized Christians, all from the same social group. A missionary couple went and stayed with that group of people soon after the first baptisms and taught them the Bible, hygiene, and so on. However, no material help was given, though there were expectations from those people.

There was a gradual transformation within that group. Today we can see their houses are clean and white-washed, they wear clean and better clothes, their health has improved and their children attend the local school. When I visited that village three years ago a caste Hindu man of that village and leader of a militant Hindu group told me with amazement about the transformation of the people with the words “your propaganda is working.” He, of course, did not know that transformation of lives by Jesus Christ brought about a social change.

#### Case Study 2:

There is a tribal area in Andhra Pradesh where people were poor, cultivation and hunting their main occupation. They were also addicted to liquor. When the Gospel began to penetrate their villages, apart from changing their lives, it changed their whole life style and their standard of living improved considerably. Apart from basic medical help and teaching from the Bible, they received no other aid.

When I participated in a convention of tribal Christians two years ago I was amazed at the lovely clothes they wore and how they participated in that convention in a disciplined matter in

sharp contrast to non-Christian tribal people all around.

### Some Conclusions

How did transformation of their social conditions take place without any material aid being given? When these people believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, they allowed God not only to transform their lives, but also their families and environment. These examples indicate that Jesus Christ not only transforms one's life, but also one's social and economic conditions, if one is obedient to Him.

This does not mean that we should not help people materially or help solve their problems. But it should be kept in its right perspective, keeping in mind that the priority is to make people into disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ. What does this mean to those who want to aid needy people in a rural areas materially and help in solving their problems? Along with the assistance given, should there be an active proclamation of the Gospel that transforms lives?

### Final Question

Imagine you are asked to give an account of your views on salvation and social action. How would you respond to the following questions?

- a) Salvation is from what?
- b) Salvation comes through what?
- c) Salvation is for what purpose?
- d) Social action is for what purpose?
- e) Christian social action has what motivation?

### For Reflection

In order to accomplish great deeds, God chose small things:

- a) A rod and a stuttering prophet (Moses) to free two million Israelite.
- b) A youth and five smooth stones to kill a giant.
- c) A boy, five biscuits, and two fish to feed 5,000.
- d) a crude fisherman to preach a revival at Pentecost.
- e) A tiny baby in Bethlehem to redeem a lost world.

## TRANSFORMATION: THE ECCLESIASTICAL QUESTION

### STUDY 19: CHURCH AND PARA-CHURCH ROLES

#### Defining Church and Parachurch

Samuel Moffett, a missions professor at Princeton Seminary in an article entitled “The Church: Too Big to be Boxed In,” comments:

'Church' is one of the most imprecise words in the Christian lexicon. And to add the prefix 'para' to it, only makes it fuzzier. What is a church? This is where the ambiguities begin. Witness the confusion – both legal and ecclesiastical – between a church, a confessional body, a denomination, a congregation, a sect, and a cult. And what is a parachurch – a voluntary society, a service agency, an electronic television program, a seminary chapel, a denominational mission agency, a faith mission, a task force? The list could go on and on (Together, April-June 1984, p. 6)

Ignatius of Antioch one of the first century bishops and martyrs offered a simple definition. “Where Jesus Christ is, there is the church,” he said. A generation later Irenaeus made a similar statement: “Where the church is, there is the Spirit of God; and where the Spirit of God is, there is the church and every grace.” Centuries later John Calvin defined the marks of the church as the faithful preaching and hearing of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments instituted by Christ. He also often added discipline referring to the church's authority in moral and social spheres. Moffatt continues:

Calvin at least was right in his willingness to distinguish between essentials and non-essentials, and in his emphatic warnings against both schismatic temper, on the one hand – which is the besetting sin of the parachurch – and ecclesiastical arrogance, on the other hand, which is an endemic fault in the churches. The latter he rejected as a 'monarchy among ministers,' citing Paul's claim to equality with the Twelve.

Does this suggest that ultimately there is no difference between church and parachurch? Not quite, but it does raise questions. IS the church a worshipping fellowship of believers? So are many parachurch organizations Is the parachurch a service agency? So are some churches. Is the church where the Word of God is faithfully preached? Independent missions do that. So do seminaries.

Perhaps the church of Jesus Christ is too big to be boxed in by Catholic orders of Protestant reformers. There are always new dimensions which we may have overlooked – the exercise of the Holy Spirit's gifts, the fulfillment of God's missionary purpose, the manifestation of his Kingdom, the fellowship of the saints, the school of discipleship, the place of prayer. Like his person and his work, the Body of Christ defies adequate description.

Reference to the original Greek helps little.

a) The word “church” derives from the Greek kuriakon and means “that which belongs to the Lord.”

b) Paul's favorite word *ekklesis* means 'called out'. It comes from 2 Greek words; *ek* meaning 'out' and *kaleo*, 'to call'. In the first century A.D. It was used in three ways. First, the Greeks used their word to describe the gathering of citizens called out of their homes to vote on public issues in the free city states of Greece. Secondly the Greek version of the Old Testament uses the word to describe Israel assembled together for religious or cultural purposes. And finally, the New Testament writers use it to describe those united by the confession that Jesus Christ is Lord. For the religious gatherings of the Jews they used the word synagogue.

c) The word *para* means 'alongside'.

Another attempt to define the Church and parachurch appears in Lesslie Newbigin's Sign of the Kingdom.

We have inherited three kinds of structure:

a) There is the territorial parish and diocese, and obvious relic of the "Christendom" era. Here the entire resident population of an area is seen as being the responsibility of one unit of the Church's organization

b) There is the 'gathered congregation' consisting of those who have chosen to form such a congregation. Its members may come from several parishes, but they are committed to one another as a congregation.

c) There is a salaried professional class of men and women comparable to such professional groups as lawyers, doctors, and civil servants, who provide the leadership for parishes and congregations.

The first of these structures is a clear relic of the 'Christendom' era. The second is a structural consequence of the privatization of religion in our culture. The third is a carry-over from the first to the second. What we have to seek now are forms of Church and ministry which neither draw men and women out of the world into a private society, nor seek to dominate the world through controlling centers of power, but enable men and women to function within the secular life of the world in ways which reflect the reality of Christ's passion and thereby make the reality of Christ's passion credible to the victims of the world's wrong.

In the effort to meet the changing situation of our contemporary culture various new structural forms have appeared and play a part in the mission of the Church. Three of these may be mentioned.

a) Program agencies of various kinds which exist to carry on work in the fields of evangelism, education and social and political action. These agencies may be related to a particular denomination, or they may be ecumenical. In any case they are program agencies and not 'local churches' in any definition of that term.

b) 'sector Ministries.' BY this is meant people, normally ordained ministers, who are related not to a 'local church' but to some sector of secular life such as industry, education or healing.

c) 'Parachuches.' I use this term without any negative intention to describe the great and growing number of groups which are formed on the basis of a common vision for the Church, or of a common concern about Christian action in the world, and which meet apart from the traditional gatherings of the 'local church' for worship. Members of these groups are frequently, but not necessarily, also members of local churches. The largest and most significant group in this category consists of the 'base communities' which have become a very rapidly growing movement. (1981, p. 58,59).

State whether the following should be defined as church or parachurch: Bangalore Cathedral; Mother Teresa's home for the dying; a hospital chapel; industrial mission programs; EFICOR (Evangelical Fellowship of Indian commission on Relief); NCFB (National Christian Fellowship of Bangladesh); BBF (Bangladesh Baptist Fellowship); World Vision; Base Ecclesial communities; Sylhet Presbyterian Synod; Union Biblical Seminary; Lucknow Lutheran Church.

#### Origins of Church and Parachurch

There were two beginning points for the church. The first was the announcement of Jesus. "I will build my church," made when Peter declared that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the Living God (Mt. 16:18). The second was when, on the Day of Pentecost God sent the Holy Spirit, and 33,000 people, responding to the miraculous signs and the inspired preaching of Peter, were added "to the church". Other significant foundational events were the calling of the disciples, the first learners and leaders of the new community of faith, and the death and resurrection of Jesus because of which the church can offer salvation and hope to the world.

The relationship of Jesus to the church is described in seven analogies in the New Testament.

- a) The Shepherd and the sheep (John 10).
- b) The Vine and the branches (John 15).
- c) The Cornerstone and the stones of the building (Eph. 2:19-22,. 1 Cor. 3-9, 1 Pet. 2-5)
- d) High Priest and the kingdom of priests (Heb. 5:1-10, Heb. 6:13, Heb. 8:6, 1 Pet. 2:5-9, Rev. 1:6).
- e) The Head and the many-membered body (1 Cor. 12:12-13, 1 Cor. 12:27, Eph. 4:4).
- f) The last Adam and the new creation (1 Cor. 15, 22, 45 & 2 Cor. 5.17).
- g) The Bridegroom and the bride (John 3:29, 2 Cor. 11:2, Eph. 5:25-33, Rev. 19:18)

How might these apply to parachurch groups?

In the New Testament there is no evidence of para church organizations. There is however a record of needs and ministries which today might be undertaken by parachurch groups. Paul and others pursued the vision of spreading the Christian faith throughout the Roman empire and established new groups of believers wherever they went on their missionary journeys. The sending agency was the church (Acts 13:2,3) and the goal of the mission was new churches. Secondly, the apostles were, from the beginning, involved in the ministry of healing (Acts 3:1-10; 5:12,15,16; 4:8-10). Thirdly, the first Christians responded to needs within the fellowship in a variety of ways.

- a) They shared their homes (Acts 2:46)
- b) They sold excess property and distributed the proceeds according to need (Acts 4:34-35).
- c) They appointed deacons to supervise relief ministries (Acts 6:1-6).
- d) They provided for widows (Acts 6:1-6; 1 Tim. 5:1-16).
- e) They sent relief to the hungry (Acts 11:28-30).
- f) They organized inter-church aid for the poor (2 Cor. 8-9)

Look up 1 Tim. 5:1-16 and note the verses which say the widows are the responsibility of the church if...

- 1. They are alone.
  - 2. They are over 60 years old.
  - 3. They are Christians.
  - 4. They have served others.
  - 5. They pray and seek God's help.
- They are not eligible for aid if (see v. 11)...

What did the following people do in the aid program described in 2 Cor. 8 and 9: Paul, Titus, the Macedonian churches, the church in Corinth? Parachurch agencies arose later in the history of Christianity usually in response to a particular need and a specific vision.

### Church and Parachurch Relationships

Samuel Moffatt assesses two discussions of the differences between church and parachurch.

One helpful approach is Ralph Winter's 'warp-and-woof' analogy, exposed in a series of path finding articles on 'The Two Structures of Mission'. In them he borrows terms from the social sciences and describes a church as a modality and a parachurch agency as a sodality. He uses modality to define the general, formal, inclusive structure of a church, as embracing all the Christians within it – young or old, male or female, clergy or laity – irrespective of their differing functions. It is a 'full community', charged with declaring and doing the whole counsel of God. Sodalities, however, are voluntary functional groups, organized for a special task or purpose. They 'do not by themselves constitute a self-perpetuating community'. Since they do not pretend to be the 'full community', they can serve several communities, cutting across the lines of church modalities. Such would be a missionary order like the Jesuits – within the papal modality, but transcending diocesan episcopal modalities. A Protestant parallel would be the interdenominational missionary societies, such as the early American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, serving both Congregationalism and Presbyterianism, or the more modern 'faith missions.

Winter's irenic thesis is that the Church needs both modalities and sodalities, as woven cloth needs both a warp and a woof. But he admits that even this analysis does not clear away the ambiguities. Sodalities merge into modalities, as specialized voluntary societies sometimes become denominations. And churches – particularly first generation churches – often look and act like sodalities. In fact, humanly speaking, the whole Church on earth is a voluntary society.

Another extremely valuable survey of the problem is a handbook on church-parachurch relations prepared by the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization entitled 'Cooperating in World Evangelization'. Its identification and description of five major areas of friction is particularly helpful:

- (1) 'dogmatism about non-essentials.'
- (2) 'the threat of conflicting authorities,'
- (3) 'strained relationships,'
- (4) 'rivalry between ministries,' and
- (5) 'suspicion about finance.'

The handbook analyzes each area of tension in some detail, with a careful balance of church and parachurch perspectives.

Better than that, it goes on to suggest approaches to mutual understanding and cooperation. 'When two groups (one church, one parachurch) want the same people, the same programs, the same dollars and the same authority, a clash is inevitable and both ministries suffer.' No one organizational pattern of relationship will solve all the tensions, but cooperation is absolutely imperative, and on the parachurch side, the committee was largely in agreement with the statement by John Stott that 'independence of the church is bad, cooperation with the church is better, service as an arm of the church is best'.

The solution he offers is four proverbs which he believes will help Christians deal with the tensions which exist.

First, "Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely". (This is for the church). But freedom also corrupts, and absolute freedom corrupts absolutely. (That is for the parachurch). This is the law of original sin.

Secondly, churches don't grow; their parts do. But only the relation of the parts of the whole prevents growth from becoming deformity. This is the law of the body and the calls.

Thirdly, let the church be the church, and the parachurch, parachurch. When the church thinks everything it does is 'mission,' it is thinking like a parachurch. When a parachurch thinks it must do everything, it is acting like a church. This is the law of defined responsibility.

And finally, 'Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels ...and...have all faith so that I can remove mountains...and though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor...and have no love, it profits me nothing.'

This is the law of love. It cannot be divided into two parts. Like the Spirit who gives it, it holds the parts together (Together, 1984, p. 7-8)

There is yet another paradigm for parachurch agencies. The most important and theological New Testament use of the prefix *para* refers to the Holy Spirit, the *paraclete*. The model for defining the role of parachurch agencies can be based on the ministry of the Holy Spirit. In relation to the Christian, the Holy Spirit challenges (John 16:9-11), comforts (John 14:16; 15:26), guides (Acts 13:2-4; 16:6-7), heals (Rom 8:26), renews (John 3:5-6; Titus 3:5-6), and purifies (Rom. 15:16, 1 Pet 1:2).

Can parachurch agencies also challenge, comfort, guide, heal, renew, and purify the church? Such a relationship would be much more beneficial than the competition and conflict which often exists.



The deeper truth is that the *paraclete*, the Holy Spirit, lives within the believers. Should the parachurch agency not function within the structure of the church rather than independent of it?

### The Basis for Social Transformation Ministries

In summarizing the teaching of this course, three foundational elements engaging and sustaining involvement in ministries of Christian social transformation can be identified.

- 1) The Teaching of the Old Testament: God dramatically opposed the oppression in Egypt with judgment and deliverance. He instructed the Hebrews to form a society with equality as its primary social value. He told the rulers they must provide for the widows and orphans, the aliens and the poor. He expected businessmen to be honest and priests to be compassionate, and for inspired prophets to have an uncompromising vision and demand for justice.
- 2) The Example of Jesus: Throughout His ministry Jesus was involved in ministries of healing of physical, emotional, psychological, mental, social and spiritual illnesses. Among His most memorable teachings are the beatitudes with their focus on the poor, and the story of the good Samaritan whose compassion for a suffering traveler still inspires people today. He clearly linked love of God with love for neighbors and challenged both religious discrimination and economic exploitation in driving the money changers from the temple.
- 3) The Gifts of the Holy Spirit: One-third of the 23 gifts mentioned in the New Testament relate directly to ministry in society. They are healing, service, giving, acts of mercy and helping. Social transformation demands also the gifts of wisdom and administration, it is part of ruling and pastoring, and an essential dimension of Christian teaching. The Holy Spirit today challenges with the vision of the Messianic Kingdom in which there will be no more suffering and pain, no more oppression and exploitation, no more war and no more racial discrimination.

### Types of Service Ministries

The church, throughout its history, has consistently delegated to specialist groups the task of service in the world. The three main expressions of this have been monastic orders, mission societies, and aid and development agencies. The first expression arose out of the church and has remained closely linked to it. The others arose almost in spite of the church and are often independent.

- 1) Monastic Orders: In the Catholic church there is a long and remarkable tradition of brotherhoods and sisterhoods of people committed to service. Brother Lawrence claimed to be worshipping God as he washed pots and pans in the monastery kitchen. St. Francis of Assisi inspired his followers, "to serve and not to count the cost, to labor and seek for no reward save that we do Thy will." He formed the Franciscan order. The Jesuits were founded by Francis Xavier who served in India and whose body is still preserved in a cathedral in Goa. The most famous living nun is Mother Teresa whose Sisters of Mercy care for the handicapped, the destitute and the dying in Calcutta and many other cities of India and the world. In these monastic orders the members usually take vows of celibacy and poverty.
- 2) Mission Societies: When William Carey began the modern missionary movement in 1795

he did it against the wishes of those who said, "If God wants to convert the heathen He would do it in His own way and His own time." However, others supported Carey and he went to India to spend the rest of his life teaching the Christian faith and translating the Bible into 14 of India's languages. Hudson Taylor and others went to China. Adoniram Judson moved to Burma and David Livingstone sailed to Africa. These pioneers were followed by thousands of dedicated Christians and everywhere they went schools, hospitals, orphanages, and skills training programs were started as well as churches. There are many church mission societies and also many independent ones. Policies differ but include:

- a) Only church to church assistance.
- b) Mission supports institutions the local Christians maintain the church.
- c) Missions send money and people.
- d) Missions send money but no personnel.
- e) Missions support indigenous or local missions.

Identify as many missions as you can who take these different approaches.

3) Aid and Development Agencies: These have emerged in the last 35 years as the west experienced post-World War Two prosperity and the gap between rich Christians in the West and the poor in the developing world widened. Christians have made many efforts to narrow this gap and respond to human needs around the world. Some of the aid and development agencies formed are based on one church, for example, Mennonite central Committee. Most are interdenominational, such as TEAR Fund, World Vision, and World Concern. There has sometimes been competition between them and the churches and missions and sometimes cooperation.

#### Case Studies in Ministries of Mercy

In meeting human needs the demands and opportunities always seem to exceed the resources of money and people. Churches and communities in the West are in danger of suffering what psychologists are calling "compassion fatigue." Inundated by appeals for assistance people may cease listening to, watching, or reading about human needs. Christians especially experience this tension. They want to help, they know the needs in many developing countries are acute, they have given money for disaster relief and development in the past, but they face a conflict of priorities.

At home they are challenged to meet the costs of supporting a pastor, maintaining church buildings, and promoting local mission. Overseas they may have to decide between denominational and faith missions, and between evangelism and church planting, relief, development, and justice ministries. On the field the issue is not only money; it is methods as well.

#### Case Study 1: Aid Agencies and Church Social Services

Because aid and development agencies are newer, have more money and are often more professional in their management they often try new methods. Mission societies and churches are sometimes caught in the trap of having to support aging institutions like hospitals and schools. The publicity of the aid and development agencies is also often much better and more widespread than that of mission societies. With limited funds mission societies and churches face a difficult decision – whether to keep the fees low to serve the poor and see the building deteriorate or raise the fees and improve the buildings but no longer serve the poor. Can you suggest a solution to this problem?

Solution 1: Serve both rich and poor. In a hospital this can be done by using the income from private beds for the rich to provide free or cheap treatment for the poor.

Solution 2: A partnership between church or mission and development agency. The church or mission maintains the service and the development agency provides the building and equipment. The focus can thus remain on the poor.

Quote an example of each of the above.

### Case Study 2: Divergent Styles:

Another issue that has arisen in the relationship between churches and aid agencies is that development workers may be paid more than local pastors and have better facilities. In rural areas where change is slow this is likely to lead to tension involving money, decision making, rate of change, lifestyle and view of life.

Example: A young development worker is posted to a village. The pastor who has been there for many years is not well educated. His messages are simple and his life style humble. He has given faithful service but does not have a great vision or hope for change. It is enough for him to survive and provide for his family. He lives in a church house and receives 300 rupees per month.

The young development worker is a college graduate. He came from a village but has lived in the city for some years. He has been employed by a development agency on a starting salary of Rs. 800 per month and has a motorbike supplied. He wants to succeed, and backed by the agency, has plans to introduce several programs into the village. The total budget for these is Rs. 100,000. They are designs to be completed in five years. Imagine you are observing this situation. Write a short description of what is likely to happen in the first and fifth years.

### Case Study 3: Personnel Placement:

A Christian aid and development agency is involved in training young adults for ministry among the poor. Many of these have been sent by churches and other aid agencies. On completion of the course they return to their assignments. Others however are independent and can be placed wherever the training center decides. At their staff meeting the trainers debate the pros and cons of sending them back to their own villages, posting them in neighboring villages, or sending them to more distant places to engage in cross-cultural ministry. State what you think the advantages and disadvantages of each option might be.

Option 1: Work in his own village.

Option 2: Work in another village of the same cultural and language group.

Option 3: Work cross-culturally in another state with a different language

Which do you think is likely to be the best option?

### Policies for aid and Development Agencies

Aid and development agencies face many decisions about who to serve and how to work. Among the matters which must be decided are the following four policies. Some of the possible solutions are listed:

#### 1) Employment Policy:

- a) Employ personnel according to qualifications only.
- b) Employ only Christians.

- c) Employ only certain types of Christians, i.e. Evangelicals, Catholics, etc.
- d) Employ anyone for more routine jobs, only Christians for senior posts.
- e) Maintain a balance of religion, caste, tribe etc. according to the locality.
- f) Employ family members only
- g) Employ only men or only women
- h) Both men and women

2) Cooperation Policy:

- a) Work with one church or denomination only.
- b) Work with local churches of several denominations
- c) Cooperate with only one type of Christian group, i.e. Evangelical, Pentecostal, etc.
- d) Relate to the church headquarters and let them manage the program.
- e) Cooperate with other Christian agencies.
- f) Work with other Christian and humanist agencies.
- g) Link with Marxist, Hindu, and Muslim development groups.
- h) Fit in with government development plans.
- i) Operate independently of everyone else.
- j) Support local community groups and initiatives regardless of membership.

3) Service Policy:

- a) Serve everyone regardless of race, religion, or creed.
- b) Target the poorest of the poor.
- c) Serve a particular tribal or community group.
- d) Work in a defined geographical area.
- e) Offer a particular program in several locations.
- f) Benefit only Christians
- g) Serve only some kinds of Christians i.e. Protestants, Methodists, etc.
- h) Serve only one age group, i.e. children, the aged, etc.
- i) Target just men or just women.
- j) Help people with a particular problem: deaf, blind, illiterate, homeless, etc.
- k) Work in responsive areas only.
- l) Assist anyone who seeks help.

4) Witnessing Policy:

- a) Preach then help.
- b) Serve then preach.
- c) Serve and distribute tracts.
- d) Serve and witness when able.
- e) Serve and witness when asked.
- f) Let the service be the witness.
- g) Allow Christian prayers only at ground-breaking and dedication ceremonies
- h) Invite Muslim and Hindu holy men to join ceremonies.
- i) Don't arrange any special ceremonies.
- j) The development agency serves and the church witnesses.

From the above lists choose the options you would vote for. Share your reasons with others in your group and with your work supervisors.

Guidelines for Church and Parachurch

In the Wheaton '83 statement on "The Church in Response to Human Need" the sections on

transformation and the local church and Christian aid agencies makes the following points:

a) The Local Church and Transformation

1. Transformed Christians in local churches witness by receiving Jesus as Savior and Lord and following Him in service.
2. The church transforms individuals and communities through worship, proclamation, and discipling. Transformation is ethical, moral, and social.
3. Wisdom is needed to know when churches should speak out publicly about social evils.
4. The social dimensions of the Gospel must be taught to develop the integrity and leadership essential to bring transformation of attitudes and lifestyle.
5. Each local church is primarily responsible to meet the needs of its members and local community.
6. Societal injustice should also be challenged after study and prayer. Protest which doesn't betray the Christian message can be effective.
7. Churches everywhere should be linked through sharing and fellowship with genuine reciprocity.
8. Churches need to learn from each other to avoid compromise and respond Christianly to materialism, racism, oppression, and violence.
9. Cross cultural exchanges of humble servants and stewards of Christ should be encouraged to build up the church network.

b) Christian Aid Agencies and Transformation

1. Aid agencies should seek to facilitate the church in the fulfillment of its historic service ministry.
2. We must continue to deepen our understanding of the Gospel and its social and political implications.
3. Exploitative advertising and high overheads must be avoided to maintain integrity and channel maximum resources to the needy.
4. Cooperation is needed at all levels – between agencies, with churches, and with local communities.
5. Agencies need to provide honest education on the process and problems in Christian transformation ministries.
6. Appreciation of and cooperation with local communities and initiatives are important to achieve partnership and experiment with indigenous models of transformation.
7. Systems of organization and accountability also need to be sensitive to local culture as well as the needs of the donor agency.
8. Agencies need to become true agents of transformation by eliminating inconsistencies and extravagance in personal and institutional lifestyles.

Your Church Transformation and You

This study closes with a reflection.

You are a walking advertisement of your church and the Christ whom it proclaims. You take your church out of its four walls and make it live in the everyday affairs of life. In fact when people think of your church, they think of you. Some have the idea that the minister is the church. It is true that the

minister often speaks for the church, declares what it stands for, and invites people into its fellowship. It is his job to know the church's business and to act on its behalf. He is your representative, but he certainly is not your substitute.

The preaching in the pulpit is fruitless unless it is reflected in the lives of members of the congregation. Classroom teaching is ineffective unless it comes to life in the attitudes and behavior of people. Your church is measured not so much by what its leaders say as by what you do. It is easy to make speeches and claims, but claims must be validated by the product. You are your church's product and the validation of its claims. You are the means by which the good life advocated by the church is communicated to people. Your church professes a concern for people; you express that concern in the way you act towards others. Your church tries to build up a Christian world; you validate these attempts by your conduct on the job or in your community. Your church claims to have a gospel that will make people new, opening them to a more satisfying life; you are the demonstration of that claim. Your daily acts as a Christian preach more sermons, teach more people, and save more lives than the words that are spoken inside the four walls of your church building. You are a cell of the living church. Without you, the church has no life.

(Author Unknown)

## TRANSFORMATION: THE ESCHATON:

### STUDY 20: ANTICIPATING THE FUTURE

#### What is Eschatology?

Eschatology literally means “the study of the end times and events.” In the biblical literature there are three traditions of eschatology.

- 1) Prophetic Eschatology: God was seen as active in the present. The prophets related the fact of the end to the present and saw the present in terms of the end. The essence of their teaching was to motivate obedience in the present.
- 2) Apocalyptic Eschatology: (Daniel, Zechariah, Enoch, Maccabees) This said that God had acted in the past and that gave the assurance that He would act in the future; but He had abandoned the present. God would vindicate His people and judge their enemies at the end of time, for which they must wait.
- 3) Realized Eschatology: The New Testament writers go beyond both prophetic and apocalyptic eschatology in affirming that the first fruits of the final victory and God's promised *shalom* can be experienced now. The Christian is privileged to experience the forgiveness and blessings of the Kingdom.

Identify these traditions: 1) God acts in history, 2) the Kingdom will come at the end of history, and 3) the blessings of the Kingdom are experienced now. Which view do you think Jesus held? Do you agree with the following interpretation? Why or why not?

In his ministry Jesus demonstrated that God was active in the world now, both saving and judging. The Kingdom was present reality where demons were driven out, the sick were healed, and new relationships of trust between alienated groups were forged. SO Jesus supported the prophetic view.

He also affirmed the apocalyptic tradition, in teaching that the disease of sin was so pervasive that the Kingdom could not be fully realized in history, but only at the final consummation and bringing in of a new heaven and a new earth.

#### Biblical References

The main biblical references to the end time events are:

##### 1) Old Testament:

- a) Wisdom Literature. Chief among these passages are the Messianic Psalms including Psalms 96-99, 103-104. Read these passages to find evidence for the following statements:  
The Lord will judge the Earth.  
This will be a time of celebration for creation.  
He will judge the world in righteousness and justice.  
There will be lightening and earthquakes.  
All will praise God.  
The Lord is King.  
His rule will be universal.  
The wicked will not share God's new earth.

b) The Prophets. Look back to the references in the Messianic Model which summarized the Old Testament hope for a future age of peace and prosperity. What promises still await fulfillment?

c) Apocalyptic Writings. Daniel 7-14 tells of future judgment on the nations. How many times are the terms Son of man, Ancient of Days, Most High, and Anointed One used in these chapters?

d) Zechariah. The One who is to reign in the everlasting kingdom is One who rode as a king on a young donkey (9:9), who was sold for 30 pieces of silver (11:3), and who was pierced (12:10)

Important events of the end time include prosperity, forgiveness, peace, neighborliness, truth (See 1:11, 3:10, 8:3, 9:12, 17:3-9).

All nations will acknowledge the Lord (8:23).

He will reign in peace over all the world (9:9-10).

there will be judgment (13:8).

Jerusalem will be secure (14:11)

## 2) New Testament:

a) Jesus – parables. Look up the following references and summarize the meaning of each. Matthew 13:8, 13:30, 13:39, 13:49, 18:14, 18:34-35, 22:1-14, 25:1-13, 25:14-30, 25:31-46.

-Warnings: Matthew 7:22-23, 10:15, 11:22-24, 12:32, 12:37, 12:41-42, 13:12, 13:40-42, 13:50, 16:26, 16:27, 18:7-9, 19:30, 20:46, 22:11-14, 23:33-35.

-Promises: Matthew 10:22, 10:43, 12:21, 13:12, 12:48, 16:18-19, 16:28, 18:18, 19:21, 19:28-29, 20:22-32, 22:30-32, 26:64, 28:20.

These references to the end of the age, the judgment, and the second coming of Jesus in Matthew's gospel alone, show the frequency this theme in Jesus teaching and the next level of eschatological consciousness and content in His ministry. Now list the main points of Matthew chapter 24 where the Second Coming is the theme of the whole chapter.

b) Paul – made the following statements on eschatology.

“I hope in the resurrection of the dead.” (Acts 23:6)

“I have the hope that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.” (Acts 24:5)

“God will judge men's secrets through Jesus Christ.” (Rom. 2:16)

“The wages of sin are death but the gifts of god is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Rom. 6:23)

“We are God's children...heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.” (Rom. 8:16-17)

“Creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed.” (Rom. 8:19)

“Creation will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.” (Rom. 8:21)

“We wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.” (Rom. 8:23)

“All Israel will be saved.” (Rom. 11:26)

“As in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.” (Rom. 11:22)

“The end will come, when He hands over the Kingdom to God the Father after HE has destroyed all dominion, authority, and power.” (1 Cor. 15:24)

“The body will be raised a spiritual, imperishable body.” (1 Cor. 15:44, 53)

“the one who raised Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus.” (2 Cor. 4:14)



“We have an eternal house in heaven not built by human hands.” (2 Cor. 5:1)

“God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.” (Phil. 2:9-11)

“The Lord Himself will come down from heaven and the dead in Christ will rise.” (1 Thes. 4:16)

“The Lord will come like a thief in the night.” (1 Thes. 5:2)

“there will be terrible times in the last days.” (2 Tim. 3:1)

Now summarize what Paul says about 1) Jesus' role, 2) creation's function, and 3) history.

c) Peter and John – also taught about the end of the age. They said...

“The present heaven and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.” (1 Pet. 3:7)

“The heavens will disappear with a roar, the elements will be destroyed, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.” (1 Pet. 3:10)

“That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire and the elements will melt in the heat.” (1 Pet. 3:12)

“But in keeping with His promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and new earth, the home of righteousness.” (1 Pet. 3:13)

“The new Jerusalem is coming down out of heaven from God.” (Rev. 3:14)

“You have made them to be a kingdom of priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth.” (Rev. 5:10)

“They have come out of the great tribulation.” (Rev. 7:14)

“God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.” (Rev. 7:17)

“He swung His sickle over the earth, and the earth was harvested.” (Rev. 14:16)

“They will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.” (20:6)

“Each person will be judged according to what he has done.” (Rev. 20:13)

“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth for the first earth had passed away.” (Rev. 21:1)

“The dwelling of God is with men, He will live with them and be their God.” (Rev. 21:3)

“He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.” (Rev. 21:4)

“The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into the city.” (Rev. 21:26)

“There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord will give them light.” (Rev. 22:5)

What do these passages teach about God? What do they say about human destiny? What will happen to the world?

### Development Goals

When Christians define development they want to emphasize a holistic approach. This may take several forms.

1) The Total Development of the Individual: Luke records that Jesus grew in wisdom and in stature, in favor with God and man (2:52). It is God's will that all should have the opportunity to fully develop mentally, physically, spiritually, and socially. This means that Christian ministries have provided schools and hospitals, established churches, and strengthened communities. Julius Nyerere, the president of Tanzania and one of the 20<sup>th</sup> century's leaders in development, commented, “If a human being is really the temple of God, we have to do something about the flies in the eyes of a child as those flies are ruining God's temple.”

2) Integrated Development of the Community: As noted previously, the poverty cycle is rarely broken when only one problem is attacked. An integrated approach seeks to impact several dimensions simultaneously. Essential components include primary health care, functional education, skills training, income and employment generating schemes, and community organization. The goal of self-reliance is best achieved when the community itself is fully involved at all elves of the development process.

Miriam Adeney comments,

Development that is integrated not compartmentalized is a necessity: health care must be buttressed by food production; food production must be buttressed by non-agricultural job creation; job creation must be buttressed by political consciousness-raising, and organized efforts pressing for more just opportunity systems, especially in the ownership of land and decision making structures. (1984, p.135)

3) Value-change: Christians have also stressed value-change as the true goal of development. Increases in productivity, better wages, new skills and opportunities enhance the quality of life of a community. They may also mean more consumerism and individuality and contribute to the weakening rather than the strengthening of a community. The question, “what values are being promoted by this program?” must constantly be asked.

What values has this course emphasized?

#### Eschatology and History

In the book The Church in Response to Human Need Vinay Samuel and Chris Sugden conclude their chapter on eschatology and history by discussing implications for development:

How then will we be able to measure where God is active and involved in the ambiguities of human history?

1. One clear guideline is where we see the values of the Kingdom replacing values not-of-God in persons, movements, and structures which give concrete expression to values. Thus, where we see human dignity being affirmed and people discovering a sense of self-worth, self-acceptance, and a sense of having something to contribute to the world and others, we can see God at work.
2. When we see people free to be able to act according to their conscience without threat from others who control their actions and thus their attitudes, we can see God at work.
3. We can see God at work as people are able to make their own contribution to the life of the community, especially as participants in decisions which affect them in the family, the community, in religious matters and the political structure.
4. We can see God at work as people develop hope, a sense that it is

possible and worthwhile to plan for the future; as people develop self-respect and a sense of the worth that they believe the community sets on them; as people share in such a way that it enhances the humanity of those they share with, rather than reduces it; as people are committed to struggle against evil and injustice and as people have a sense of equity and justice.

5. We can see God at work when women, the weak, and the handicapped have a role which accords them dignity and equality, and when their needs receive a priority. We can see God at work when power is shared in such a way that all benefit from its exercise and none are dehumanized.

6. We can see God at work when there is a sense of God's presence, a sense of the presence of evil without and within and a sense of humility, about the limitations of our knowledge in the face of God's wisdom.

7. We will particularly look for God's work in actions such as decision-making, information sharing, emergency assistance, jobs, social functions, family decisions, actions in relation to the under-privileged and marginalized, actions which involve the interaction of the individual and the community, actions which relate to the use of human and material resources and to the worship of God.

8. We will also look for signs of God's activity expressed in the structures of the family, the ethnic group, structures of political decision-making, and structures of religious, social, and economic organization.

Write down the key words which summarize each paragraph of this statement.

#### A Transformed, Transforming Church

Dr. Ronald Sider concluded his article on "Evangelism and Social Responsibility" (Mustard Seeds, June 1984) with a dream:

I dream of a movement in the church today that is filled with the Holy Spirit, a movement that immerses its activity in prayer, a movement that chatters the Gospel to every person who has not yet accepted Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Savior, a movement that challenges every injustice in society in the name of the God revealed in Holy scripture.

I dream of a biblically balanced church that will go to every person no matter how poor and oppressed, no matter how battered and trampled their self-esteem and initiative may be, and tell them that the Lord of this whole universe loves them; a church that will tell them that God wants them to repent of their despair and sins and enter into a living personal relationship with the Risen Lord of History.

I dream of a biblical church that will be visibly demonstrating in its common life such different, loving, redeemed relationships that the poor and oppressed will eagerly flock to their fellowship. Such a church will hasten to share the biblical truth that the God who now lives in their hearts is a god of justice who abhors

present unjust social systems which discriminate and oppress. Nothing could be more explosive than a faithful sharing of this total biblical truth with the poor and oppressed.

I dream of a church that will dare to go to the rich and powerful and tell them God loves them too and wants them to repent and follow Christ. Certainly such a church would never forget to say that they must accept Jesus as Lord as well as Savior, that coming to Christ means not just forgiveness of sins but radical change so that Christ is Lord of all business practices and political decisions regardless of the cost.

I dream of a church that would immerse all of this activity in deep, intercessory prayer, a church that is totally dependent on the transforming breath of the blessed Holy Spirit. I dream of a Church that would have tens of thousands of persons interceding all night as others worked in government and business to demand sweeping systemic changes for the sake of peace and justice.

I dream of a church that would, after it had exhausted every other available means of influencing government, even dare to use massive boycotts and non-violent civil disobedience to demand an end to the nuclear arms race.

I dream of a church that remembers that earlier heroes of the faith defied governments, knowing they had to obey God rather than people; a church that, as a last resort, protests the power of the governments until those governments seek justice, correct oppression, and abolish nuclear weapons.

Such a church might be persecuted like the early Christians. Such a church might have martyrs. Such a church might also change the course of history.

Underline the elements in this vision you most identify with. Can we make a response in prayer and commitment to the Lord of history and His Kingdom program in a troubled world?

#### The Lord's Prayer: A confessional response

I cannot say "Our" if my religion has not room for other people and their needs.

I cannot say "Father" if I do not demonstrate that relationship in my daily life.

I cannot say "Which art in heaven" if all my concerns and pursuits are in earthly things.

I cannot say "Hallowed by Thy Name" if I, who am called by His name, am not holy.

I cannot say "Thy will be done" if I am unwilling or resentful of having it done in my life.

I cannot say "on earth as it is in Heaven" unless I am willing to serve Him here and now.

I cannot say “Give us this day our daily bread”. Without making an honest effort for it, or by ignoring the needs of others.

I cannot say “Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us,” if I continue to bear a grudge – a grudge against anyone.

I cannot say “Lead us not into temptation” if I deliberately choose to stay in a place where I may be tempted.

I cannot say “Deliver us from evil” if I am not prepared to fight in the spiritual realm with prayer.

I cannot say “Thine is the Kingdom” if I do not give the Kingdom the disciplined obedience of a loyal subject.

I cannot say “Thine is the power” if I fear what my friends and neighbors might say about me.

I cannot say “Thine is the glory” if I am seeking my own glory first.

I cannot say “Amen” unless I can honestly say also, 'cost what it may, this is my prayer.'  
(Martin Jones)

### Case Study 1:

#### EAST OF EDEN: PEOPLE AS PARTICIPANTS OR PAWNS

##### Human Pawns

1974 and 1975 were traumatic years for the newly conceived but crowded Bangladesh. The monsoon floods which each year inundate the land and keep it green and fertile were three feet higher than usual. Swollen rivers swallowed up farms and villages. Asia's Eden had turns into Noah's nightmare. Thousands of displaced people crowded onto the sidewalks of the capital, Dhaka, until approximately 100,000 lived on the footpaths, railway stations, and launch ghats.

Sheik Mujibur Rahman, freedom fighter; Father of the Nation, leader of the ruling Awami League party, and President of this fledgling democracy, instructed the army to clean up the capital's streets. In nighttime raids, the squatters were rounded up, often without time to collect their sacks of belongings, and driven to one of three destinations.

Two large squatter camps, Tongi and Adamjee, were already established on Dhaka's outskirts. Within a week they were forced to accommodate another 65,000 people. The remaining 35,000 were taken east, out of the city, and dumped onto a desolate, 100 acre man-made island, dredged up from the Sityalakha River.

They were forbidden to return to the city.

##### Death is My Neighbor

Seven years later, the people told their story to a concerned development work. For some, the pain of remembrance brought tears, floods of them, streaming down their faces.

“We didn't even know where we were,” they said. “There was nothing on the island – no trees, no houses, no food. Not even the shelter of tin and plastic like we had on the sidewalks. A few of us had some food, but it was dangerous to cook it for most others had nothing. AS the rice boiled, a hungry crowd would gather round to watch. We had to place the children in the center and protect them or someone else would snatch the food before they could get it to their mouths.”

“Others watched to see where the rice water was tipped onto the group, and before it soaked away they mixed the mud into a paste and ate it. People began dying; especially the children and the old people.”

“It was too much for them. We waited...some of us were too shocked to know what was happening. We expected help but a week passed and more. IT was 10 days before an aid agency discovered we were there and came to help us. It was the International Red Cross. They organized us.”

“The island was divided into squares and every family were given a plot. We got bamboo to make our home and rations to keep us alive. We even began to hope again, until cholera struck. It seemed every family lost someone. Some families were wiped out completely. In fact they told us 10,000 people died that year on the island: there were a lot of funerals.”

### Rebuilding

Over the next year, the “bustaharas” (bustee dwellers) of Champara Island rebuilt their shattered lives as they constructed their simple houses and planted papaya and banana trees. They made a desert bloom. Other agencies joined the effort to give them a future with hope. The Red Cross helped with building materials and food; Save the Children fund provided some medical care and prevented a recurrence of the cholera catastrophe; a Christian agency started cottage industries and a school.

Of course there were some difficult times. The people were isolated from the city, making even casual work was very difficult to find. The most employable were the young girls and every night they were taken down the river to serve as prostitutes.

To the casual observer, however, the simple, neat houses and abundance of green plants suggested a miracle. This forsaken mud bank had become a “Garden of Eden.”

### The Nightmare

In 1982 the peace and progress of Champara was shattered. Several times important-looking visitors came to the island. As fact emerged from rumor it became clear that Dhaka, the rapidly growing capital city, needed more water and the World Bank was prepared to help the Government of Bangladesh to provide it. Champara Island had originally been created as the site for a water treatment plant and was still the most desirable location. There was only one problem: it was now home for thousands of people, placed there on government orders. Responsibility for the island had even been transferred to the Housing Ministry and the people had been assured that they'd never again be homeless. Champara was theirs.

Now all that was reversing. The Christian agency began to make some inquiries and discovered a lot of lobbying going on. The project's principle partners were the Water Board, the World Bank, and a multinational construction company. The people of Champara were not consulted. There were two options: plan one was to use five acres of the island for the water treatment plant and pumping station. The people could stay; there would be work from them there, at least for a few months. Plan two was to develop the whole island with housing, offices, and other industries. The bustaharas would have to go. It seemed the government and the construction company favored the second option. IT was a 100 million dollar project.

“But Where will the people go?” asked the development worker.

“Somewhere else,” was the only reply.

“We could never go through it again,” said the people. “If we are forced to leave Champara, we would commit suicide. We could not watch our families die before our eyes again.”

### Postscript

The Christian agency persuaded the World Bank to allocate one million dollars for resettling the people of Champara. Four years later, however, the Champara bustaharees are still there and construction has not yet begun.

What rights do people have, which must be considered in development programs such as this?

How do you balance the rights of the residents of Champara and the need of the city for more drinking water?

### Case Study 2:

#### THE RAGPICKERS: OPTIONS FOR THE URBAN UNSKILLED

### The Question:

It was a sleepless night for James Solomon. For some months he had been involved in EFICOR's latest and most exciting project – helping the ragpickers. But as he tossed and turned in his bed he wondered how best to help. He prayed for the wisdom of his famous namesake.

### The Problem:

Every city in India, and in most other countries has residents whose occupation and means of survival is sifting through other people's rubbish. In those heaps of waste on the sidewalks, in bins, or at the dump, there might be something to eat or sell. SO with a large sack over their shoulders they set out each day through the labyrinthine lanes of the city in search of treasure. Usually they end the day with just enough of value to keep themselves alive.

### Shubash:

Shubash had migrated to the city some years before with his parents. He tries school but his family lived in a slum and not many of the children went often, for a variety of reasons. Some were retarded from malnutrition during infancy. Most faced discrimination, and even hostility, because they were low caste. Often the teacher didn't come. It was impossible to study at home. They needed to work to earn income for the family. They couldn't afford books. It was embarrassing to be in a class where the majority were younger and brighter. No one cared

whether these children of the slum attended school or not.

Shubash's father hadn't found the hope-for factory job and so had become a ragpicker, earning about 15 rupees (\$1.00 USD) per day for the family. It was not enough; they were often hungry. So at 8 years of age Shubash had done the only thing he knew how to do: become a ragpicker. After an apprenticeship of several months working alongside his father, he joined some other street boys of similar age and occupation. Shubash averaged Rs. 7 per day, most of which he turned over to his family.

#### The Cooperative:

For 15 years EFICOR had been responding to the needs of India's poor. Disaster relief after floods and fires, development projects in partnership with churches, orphanages, job training, well-drilling, seminars and courses on community development were all important dimensions of its program. By 1985, with an annual budget of \$1 million it reached to the far corners of a needy land. But in India, needs are everywhere.

Within one block of the EFICOR office in Bangalore, were slums and people sleeping on the streets, Shubash and his friends among them. James began talking with them and quickly concluded something could be done to help them. As he probed their situation, he discovered an "Oliver Twist" saga. The villains in 20<sup>th</sup> century India, as in 19<sup>th</sup> century England, were the middlemen. They paid a pittance for what the boys collected but reaped a handsome profit themselves. James suggested a cooperative and submitted a project proposal to EFICOR. An empty garage, then a new shed became the sorting center and soon the newly opened bank account had a growing balance. Shubash's daily allowance no often exceeded his father's.

#### Social Problems:

Money wasn't the only problem faced by Shubash and his friends. They were often harassed by police who suspected them of nearly every theft and robbery committed in the city. Most of it was not true.

They also needed a safe place to sleep. They seldom washed properly – a bathroom would be a luxury! Of course they also needed some training to run the cooperative and to develop their innate abilities.

And they needed a friend. James had another prayer too. He hoped that they might want to hear the "good news for the poor," the truth that Jesus came to bring hope and freedom to the oppressed such as they.

As he met with the boys a vision emerged from their talks. He began to articulate it at the office and found others to share it. So when the shed was built, it included a bathroom, a cooking corner, and sleeping place amid the piles of rags. A karom board appeared, someone donated a radio. As they met other ragpickers on the street or at the dumb, Shubash and his partner proudly spoke of "our place." They certainly weren't rich but they had begun to prosper in a modest way.

#### The Future:

James was happy as he thought of all that had been achieved in the 18 months since the ragpickers project began. But one question increasingly demanded his attention. Shubash



was obviously a very intelligent young boy. He was quick to grasp the ideas behind the cooperative. He was adept at fixing almost anything. He understood rudimentary bookkeeping. Though one of the coop's younger members, he demonstrated leadership abilities. His ready laughter and impish humor made him popular.

So as 1985 gave way to 1986 and James thought of his own future he also lay awake thinking of Shubash. "Is there a future for him in ragpicking? Is it the right career for a young boy? Are there realistically any other options for Shubash?" Included in his resolutions for the New Year, James determined to find the answers.

What do you think they are?

### Case Study 3:

#### EVANGELISM AND SOCIAL ACTION: THIRSTY SOULS & DRILLING WELLS

##### The Board Meeting:

No one expected such an intense debate to erupt, especially when discussing EFICOR's most successful program, the Rig Unit. It was hard to remember how it started, but the debate raged for an hour and at the end, though a lot had been said, little had been resolved. The topic being debated was how to combine evangelism and social action.

##### The Rigs

With a monsoon climate, India alternates between too much rain and too little. In the summer there are often floods but for six months of the year not a drop falls over most parts of the country. Parched land and thirsty people cry out for water.

Early in its history EFICOR acquired a drilling rig and began to search for water in the villages and occasionally the cities of India.

In 1984 three rigs each averaged more than one well per week for a total of 233 wells. In 1985 they exceeded 300 wells with a more than 90 percent success rate. The program director, David Blackham, a clever and dedicated drilling engineer inspired confidence in workers, villagers, government officers, and EFICOR board members. His Christian testimony and integrity were also appreciated. It was the first part of his report which participants turned to as the discussion warmed up. Paragraph one was headed "Evangelism Through Water" and the second section, "Evangelism through Films in Both Rural and Urban Areas."

##### Holistic Evangelism or Evangelistic Social Action:

The majority of villages to which the rigs went were exclusively Hindu. Sometimes there were also Muslim or Christian families clustered in one corner of the community. EFICOR had always focused on the poor rather than serving the interests of the Christian group or the more affluent. In doing so they sometimes had to resist intense pressure from church, political, or local business and community leaders. The rigs were still welcome however, because of the lower cost, prompter service, absence of corruption and politicization, and a success rate that far exceeded the government's 60 percent.

In southern India the recent conversion of a whole community from Hinduism to Islam in protest against centuries of discrimination and the slowness of change under Hinduism, pricked the Christian conscience and alerted Hindu conservatives to the possibility of a mass movement out of India's historic and dominant faith. Combining evangelism and social action was a hot issue!

##### Beyond Prayers and Posters:

The main identification mark on the EFICOR rigs was text painted on the side proclaiming Jesus as the water of life. This silent testimony often invited explanation to curious villagers anxiously and hopefully watching the drilling. These opportunities were gladly accepted if not actively sought. A specifically Christian action of the staff was to gather around the rig before drilling commenced and join in a prayer for God's blessing on the intense efforts of the upcoming three or four days.

A high success rate, sometimes in places where several previous attempts by others had

failed, convinced the team that prayer was a vital Christian resource for practical ministries. Villagers were always on hand to observe this exercise and sometimes even participated. In the context of a society where almost everyone has a belief in God and engages in regular prayer, while the form and content might differ, the practice is familiar and acceptable. When after their hard labor water gushed from the hole sun deep through layers of rock, the team celebrated with a prayer of thanks.

After capping the well, the drilling team laid a concrete pad and fixed a hand pump into place. This meant that to complete the task and instruct the villagers in simple maintenance essential for the pump's continued success the rig team's involvement with the village spanned two or three weeks. With workers living on site to maximize drilling time, strong bonds of friendship with the local villagers often developed. Indeed, the program was designed as cooperative venture with the villagers providing food as the team provided technical service.

Now EFICOR had begun to coordinate a program of evangelism in villages where they'd sunk wells. The questions this posed for the board were:

- a) Should social action and evangelism be combined in this way?
- b) Should EFICOR develop a partnership with a church or other agency and itself engage only in social action?
- c) IN light of John 4 could EFICOR fulfill its ministry by only offering physical water?
- d) Was the justice of providing for the needs of the marginalized itself evangelism?
- e) Did the constitutional guarantee of freedom to practice and propagate one's faith cover this situation?

As the meeting closed without agreement on a policy the matter was put on the agenda for the next meeting and an extra half day allocated to resolve it. "What do we most need – the wisdom of Solomon or the courage of Paul?" wondered the chairman.

## Case Study 4:

### A PARIAH AMONG PRODIGALS: THE STORY OF DIVYA SHANTI

#### On the Margins of the City

“Divya Shanti” means “peace of god.” It is a church on the outskirts of Bangalore, but Lingarajapuram, where the church is set is far from peaceful. It is a bustling, dusty new suburb over the railway tracks where the amenities of the city have yet to reach. This means that it is crowded, with unpaved roads and no piped water. Like colonies on the outskirts of other Indian cities it is a microcosm of the country. Tamils and Malayalees; Hindus, Muslims, and Christians; merchants, managers, and menials are thrown together on the edge of a rapidly growing metropolis in the common search for work and education. For many the dream is still beyond their grasp. They struggle simply to survive and are often victims of exploitation. Its proximity to the city's Center for the Handicapped means that there are many disabled people on the busy streets in addition to the many unemployed in its squatter settlements.

#### A Vision for the Poor

In an established part of the city a flourishing and affluent church with its own school, hostels, and home for the elderly caught a vision for ministry among the poor, not only on their doorstep but also in Lingarajapuram on the fringe of the city. The church began in a conventional way of conducting Sunday School classes. In the late '70's the pastor's wife launched a new phase of ministry in the newly erected church building – a school for children who couldn't afford or hadn't gained entry into the public schools. Numbers grew rapidly but regardless of how many were accommodated, the demand always exceeded their ability to respond. Boys' and girls' hostels were established to assist orphans and those whose homes were totally unsuitable for learning. A lunch program gave the poorest children their only guaranteed meal of the day.

#### No Stained Glass Sanctuary

The church in Lingarajapuram was deliberately constructed as a multi-purpose building. There are no stained glass windows, which is fortunate as the glass they do have is frequently broken by boisterous children or bouncing balls. Each Saturday the building is transformed from a cluster of five classrooms separated only by plywood partitions and curtains, to a worship center. THE blackboards are pushed back and the benches lined up; the pulpit and communion table appear from a corner of the stage. Adults join the children for worship ignoring the stains on the walls that tell them that, after the service is over, their church will change back into a school

A philosophy of stewardship in a needy environment and the opportunity the school provides for awareness of needs and involvement in the community persuades members and visitors that the wear and tear and hum of activity should not be traded for the traditional concept of the church as a haven of peace into which one can periodically escape for an injection of faith. To Vinay and Colleen Samuel, who moved from the larger sponsoring church to this pioneering congregation, the Gospel is made relevant through interaction with the community.

#### Economic Issues

Most people live in Lingarajapuram out of necessity rather than choice, for there the cheaper land and rents make economic survival possible. High unemployment however still leaves many struggling. Divya Shanti has responded typically with a handicraft industry for women

and an engineering workshop for young men. In the same year a clinic was built on the church property to help with the medical needs of the 370 school children, their families, and the many poor members of the community.

### A Model for the Church

India traces its Christianity back to the first century

A.D. With the tradition that St. Thomas came to Madras. The Syrian Orthodox and Catholic Churches also claim a long heritage in the country. Protestantism arrived with William Carey at the end of the eighteenth century. As part of the Empire, the dominant influence on these churches had been British. So today India is dotted with Gothic cathedrals and traditional programs.

Divya Shanti is raising the possibility of another model for the church. It poses the questions:

Is the church being “the church” when it confines itself to worship?

What kind of investment in building should be made in a poor society?

How do you balance people and property, needs and ministries?

In what ways do worship and social action complement each other?

Are church school, employment programs, and clinics really vehicles for evangelism?

### Shalom

Divya Shanti understands the peace of God in terms of the Hebrew word *shalom* which embraces physical, social, spiritual, and economic well-being through the restoration of relationships to God, neighbor, and the decision making and economic resources of the community. Through struggle, pain, and frequent laughter the people of Divya Shanti seek to minister this peace of God in Lingarajapuram. Is this the future, and most valid shape on the church?

Discuss models, visions, and experiences of the most valid shape of the church among the poor.

## Case Study 5:

### WHEN THE SKY FALLS DOWN: RESPONDING TO DISASTERS

#### Introduction:

In a popular English children's story, Chicken Licken, struck on the head by an acorn, becomes convinced that the sky is falling down and runs off to warn the king, persuading everyone he meets on the way that disaster is imminent. A disaster does come, when Chicken Licken is eaten by the fox, but it isn't the one he predicted.

In some countries of the world disasters are frequent and fatal. This case study from EFICOR tells of one organization's response strategy.

#### Disaster Strikes

The morning mail descended in a pile on the Director's desk. Carrying it in, his administrative officer had already shuffled the telegram to the top of the stack; telegrams meant action! They could guess the contents, as the morning news of floods on the Ganges plain had already reached them. It was a brief message: "River breached. Hundreds of houses destroyed. Need help! - Zachariah, Patna." For the next half hour other work was pushed aside as the Director and the Disaster Relief Coordinator swung into action.

"Simon's our man," they said in unison at the end of their discussion, so Simon was briefed on his next assignment. Within hours he had farewelled his family, collected his traveling gear, taken possession of the Rs. 30,000 hurriedly withdrawn from the bank and was on the train headed for Patna. It was a routine he now easily took in his stride after 2 years on the emergency team. For a young man, though, the responsibility was still awesome. He was glad the other occupants of his carriage weren't aware of the valuable contents of his battered briefcase.

Day faded into night and brightened into day again before he reached Patna. In the grey dawn he saw the expanse of flood water which had swept away crops and houses. Upon arriving Simon made his way directly to the collector's office to join the other respondents to the disaster and negotiate responsibility for the area neighboring Rev. Azariah's church. It was granted, noted in the overall relief plans, and an authorization letter prepared and signed.

Simon's journey to the Patna Evangelical Church was eventful and varied. It began on a rickshaw and continued by bus. He crossed the river on a launch and walked the final two miles, with water often up to his knees. At the church, which temporarily houses half the congregation, Simon was enthusiastically welcomed. It seem that praise dominated over despair among this band of desperately poor villagers, some of whom had lost everything and faced months of hardship, until new crops could be planted and reaped.

The villagers had filled the time of waiting for the floods to recede and help to arrive, with much bible study and prayer. With Simon's arrival it seemed both prayers were answered and they agreed that the next day they would survey the neighborhood to determine needs. Simon spread his sleeping mat on the floor of the church alongside his Christian brothers and sisters and shared with them EFICOR's disaster relief strategy. They debated heatedly over who the beneficiaries should be, with opinion first equally divided between restricting it to Christians and to serving all, regardless of religion. When Simon showed them the collector's letter, those who thought the food and goods should only go to Christians, conceded. The

pastor reinforced their decision with an impromptu sermon on being good Samaritans and on using the opportunity to show Christian compassion. They prayed and slept.

Next morning while some fanned out from the church to discover the fate of neighbors, Simon the two of the Church leaders reported back to the collector and obtained medicines for cholera inoculations, necessary because of the contaminated water supply. At noon they converged on the Church again, turning it into a medical center and relief supply base for the neighborhood. That afternoon teams rode bicycles, bullock carts, and walked on foot to the sodden bazaar to buy the necessary wheat, rice, blankets and kitchen utensils. The government officer despatched to help them organize the program was amazed they had done so much already, and lodge a positive report on their identification of target group and their recording and administering of relief supplies. The shouting and jostling for positions among the large crowd of beneficiaries settled down as the people realized that everyone would be treated equally. Smiles creased their worried faces as they saw the quality of the blankets and size of rations. Maybe Christians did care about others after all!

Simon reminded the Patna church members that Jesus chose to live as a poor man and often had nowhere to sleep, but he also had to combat the impatience, paternalism, and discrimination that was likely to creep into a typical relief process. "This disaster," Simon said, "none of us chose, but how we respond to it may determine the impact of the Christian message in this area for decades to come. We must do everything in the spirit of Jesus."

As Simon boarded the train out of Patna the church leaders thanked him for being a God-sent bearer of good tidings. "But what did you mean when you said this action would be either a sign or a countersign of the Kingdom of God?" asked the youth leader. That's for you to determine," shouted Simon as the train gathered speed.

"And that's the question for all our actions," reflected Simon as he rejoined his family, "whether the sky falls down or not."

#### For Reflection

- a) Outline EFICOR's process in the steps they take. For example, Step 1: Telegram arrives from disaster area.
- b) What difficulties do you see in using local church volunteers to help in a relief program?
- c) What advantages does using local church volunteers have?
- d) How should Christian development agencies decide who should receive relief supplies?
- e) Giving away relief supplies and rations makes people dependent. Can this be avoided?
- f) What follow-up program should the church do after the emergency has passed?

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